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CHURCH ORDER

OF THE

Christian Reformed Church

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CHURCH ORDER

of the

Christian Reformed Church

As adopted by the Synod of 1920

and

Synodical Decisions, Formulas,
Rules and Regulations for
Committees, Etc.

—*BY*—

W. STUART and G. HOEKSEMA

The VAN NOORD BOOK AND PUBLISHING CO.
Publishers
Grand Rapids, Mich.
1921

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.A5
1920

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Grand Rapids, Mich.

OCT -5 1921

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PREFACE

This first edition of the Church Order in English marks a new epoch in the history of the Christian Reformed Church We might call it the period of transition from the Holland into the American. The appearance of this translation, for such it is largely, has been delayed for several years. This delay is due to various causes. Principal among these must be mentioned the slow process of the Americanization of our churches; the difficulties connected with the translation of technical terms and the hesitancy of a Synod to pass on such translations. Since, however, the Synod of 1920 approved the following translation, the time has come for its publication. This translation would, however, be incomplete without the translation of the various synodical decisions and resolutions of the past.

When the publisher approached the redactors of this translation, he naturally selected some of the men that had a share in the translation of the Church Order proper, so that the translation of the other material incorporated in this volume might be in uniformity with it. The question whether a brief explanation and amplifications were to be added had to be decided in the negative for the simple reason that only authoritative material was to be given, and no personal interpretations, which have no synodical approval. Hence the

matter of the choice of material was a simple one.

The translation of technical terms is a difficult task, and the translators are fully aware of the fact that there must needs be many shortcomings in a work of this kind. To be literal and at the same time to give idiomatic English is an impossibility. It required three translations to meet the requirements of Synod, and the final result is not even now in every respect satisfactory. It is the best that could be had under the circumstances.

The volume contains the things the officers of the church ought to know, and the things the membership of the church ought to study. For three centuries this Church Order has ruled in the life of the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands and in our own churches since the day of their birth.

We are greatly indebted to the work done by Prof. Heyns in collecting the synodical decisions and resolutions of the past. We have greatly profited by his work.

We shall be glad to receive any corrections and suggestions for the next edition which ought soon to be needed. The process of Americanization has advanced of late by leaps and bounds, and the coming generation ought to be acquainted with our Church Order.

May the Lord own this edition for the perpetuation of order in our churches.

W. Stuart.
G. Hoeksema.

CHURCH ORDER
OF THE
CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

(Approved by the Synod of 1920, Vid. Art. 47, 13.)

ARTICLE 1

For the maintenance of good order in the Church of Christ it is necessary that there should be: offices, assemblies, supervision of doctrine, sacraments and ceremonies, and Christian discipline; of which matters the following articles treat in due order.

OF THE OFFICES

ARTICLE 2

The offices are of four kinds: of the Ministers of the Word, of the Professors of Theology, of the Elders, and of the Deacons.

ARTICLE 3

No one, though he be a Professor of Theology, Elder or Deacon, shall be permitted to enter upon the Ministry of the Word and the Sacraments without having been lawfully called thereunto. And when any one acts contrary thereto, and after being frequently admonished does not desist, the Classis shall judge whether he is to be declared a schismatic or is to be punished in some other way.

Excepting the ecclesiastical regulation touching religious addresses of theological students, no one has the

right in Public Worship to speak a word of edification, as it is called, unless this right has been granted him by his Classis, and even then this right applies only to the district of said Classis and not outside of it. Acts 1916, Art. 30, 4.

ARTICLE 4

The lawful calling of those who have not been previously in office, consists:

First, in the ELECTION by the Consistory and the Deacons, after preceding prayers, with due observance of the regulations established by the consistory for this purpose, and of the ecclesiastical ordinance, that only those can for the first time be called to the Ministry of the Word who have been declared eligible by the churches, according to the rule in this matter; and furthermore with the advice of Classis or of the counselor appointed for this purpose by the Classis;

Secondly, in the EXAMINATION both of doctrine and life which shall be conducted by the Classis, to which the call must be submitted for approval, and which shall take place in the presence of three Delegates of Synod from the nearest Classes;

Thirdly, in the APPROBATION by the members of the calling church, when, the name of the minister having been announced for two successive Sundays, no lawful objection arises; which approbation, however, is not required in case the election takes place with the co-operation of the

congregation by choosing out of a nomination previously made.

Finally, in the public ORDINATION in the presence of the congregation, which shall take place with appropriate stipulations and interrogations, admonitions and prayers and imposition of hands by the officiating minister (and by other ministers who are present) agreeably to the Form for that purpose.

Usages in our Churches

A. The Election of a Minister of the Word takes place as follows:

1. The Consistory makes a nomination, usually of three Ministers or Candidates eligible to a call.
2. This nomination is announced from the pulpit two successive Sundays for the approbation of the Church. At the same time the date for the congregational meeting is announced.
3. At the congregational meeting the members vote from the nomination by secret ballot. A majority vote decides. Only members in full communion and in good standing have a vote (cf. Acts, 1892, Art. 47-a, 48-a). Blank ballots are subtracted from the total number, then the majority is established.

B. Advice of Classis and Counselor.

1. Classis appoints a Counselor for vacant churches to advise the church in eventual difficulties and to represent Classis at the calling of a minister.
2. The consistory of a vacant church requests hand-opening of Classis when calling for the first time,

since the question arises whether the calling church is able properly to support a minister.

3. The nomination is submitted for approval to the Classis or its counselor that nothing in violation of synodical decisions take place.

4. The counselor presides at the congregational meeting that he may see to it that the procedure is orderly and legal and that the call-letter is properly written out and signed by all members of the consistory. The counselor signs the call-letter as representing the Classis for the approval of the call.

C. Classical Examination of Candidates for the Ministry.

I. Schedule for the Classical Examination of Candidates, Acts, 1920, Art. 36.

1. Dogmatics.

2. Practical branches, covering:

a) Personal godliness.
b) Motives for seeking the ministry.
c) Test of insight in the practice of pastoral work.

3. Knowledge of the Bible, specifically touching:—
a) The character of the Holy Scriptures.
b) The contents of the Holy Scriptures, in aforenamed sense.

4. Knowledge of our Standards, touching:—
a) Knowledge of the meaning and purpose of the Standards.
b) Knowledge of the contents of the Standards.
c) Knowledge of the application of the Standards of our Church to life.

5. Controversy.
   The distinctive spiritual currents of our time in contrast with the Reformed or Calvinistic life-and-world-view.

6. Test of Gospel Preaching, including:
   a) Preaching before the church in the hearing of Classis.
   b) Critical discussion of that sermon.

II. 1. At the conclusion of the examination and after proper deliberation on it, one of the brethren leads in prayer for the guidance of the Holy Spirit, before the secret ballot is cast.

2. If the examination is sustained, the Candidate signs the Formula of Subscription.

3. A certificate, signed by the President and the Clerk of Classis is then given the Candidate, authorizing him in the name of the Lord to engage in the work of the Ministry.

D. Synodical Delegates for Examination.

1. The Delegates for Examination are appointed by Synod, one from each Classis. Each Classis shall propose a primarius and an alternate to Synod.

2. Every classical examination must be attended by three of the Delegates of adjacent Classes.

3. At the conclusion of the examination, at which they shall have the privilege to cross-question the Candidate, these Delegates submit a joint report and their reasons for their advice.

4. If the vote of Classis is contrary to the advice of the Delegates and no agreement can be reached, the question of admission shall be decided by Synod. Until such time the ordination of the Candidates shall be postponed and in the meanwhile no

congregation of another Classis shall have the right to extend a call to him and no Classis be permitted to examine him.

5. The Delegates for Examination submit a report of all their activities to Synod.
6. Traveling expenses of these Delegates are paid from the Synodical treasury. Acts, 1912, Art. 72-7.

E. Candidates.

1. No call shall be extended to Candidates until a month after their graduation. Acts, 1884, Art. 35.
2. For the consideration of a call or calls received, the Candidates are granted a period of six weeks. Acts, 1916, Art. 30-1.
3. If the classical examination of the Candidate should not be satisfactory and the Congregation persists in desiring him, he will be given an opportunity at the next meeting of Classis for another examination, especially in those branches in which he was deficient. Acts, 1894, Art. 64.

ARTICLE 5

Ministers already in the Ministry of the Word, who are called to another congregation, shall likewise be called in the aforesaid manner by the Consistory and the Deacons, with observance of the regulations made for the purpose by the Consistory and of the general ecclesiastical ordinances for the eligibility of those who have served outside of the Christian Reformed Church and for the repeated calling of the same Minister during the same vacancy; further, with the advice of the Classis or of the counselor, appointed by the Clas-

sis, and with the approval of the Classis or of the Delegates appointed by the Classis, to whom the ministers called show good ecclesiastical testimonials of doctrine and life, with the approval of the members of the calling congregation, as stated in Article 4; whereupon the minister called shall be installed with appropriate stipulations and prayers agreeably to the Form for this purpose.

1. As a brief ministry in a church is usually contrary to her best interests, Consistories are advised not to call ministers that have been laboring in their charge but for a short time. Acts 1914, Art. 64, 1.

2. Synod advises that Consistories of vacant churches in making a nomination, shall not nominate ministers that have not served their present church for two years—unless special, preponderant reasons exist—and that a counselor who deems that he must approve a nomination, containing the name of such a minister, must give an account of his reasons to Classis. Acts, 1916, Art. 30-3.

3. A second call to the same minister during the same vacancy may not be extended within a year without the advice of Classis. Acts, 1906, Art. 35-36.

4. When there is a difference of opinion concerning the legality of a call between a consistory and its counselor, the consistory shall not proceed without the consent of Classis. A. B. Art. 51.

5. If a minister leaves a church within a year and the moving expenses have exceeded $50, the calling church shall refund the church he leaves expenses in full; if he leaves within two years, three-fourths; if in three years, one-half; if in four years, one-fourth of his moving expenses. This article shall be incorporated in the call-letter. Acts, 1884, Art. 52; Acts, 1890, Art. 63.

6. In case a church calls a minister from a church that had to refund another church, such a church need only pay for the traveling expenses. Acts, 1908, Art. 54 V.

7. **Usage without Synodical Approbation.**

Ministers of other denominations are called only after Consistory and Classis, upon careful investigation, are satisfied as to their training, official standing, confession and walk, and before entering the ministry submit to a "colloquium doctum" before the Classis of the calling church and in the presence of the delegates for examination.

ARTICLE 6

No Minister shall be at liberty to serve in institutions of mercy or otherwise, unless he be previously admitted in accordance with the preceding articles, and he shall, no less than others, be subject to the Church Order.

Spiritual Advisors for Institutions shall be called by a neighboring church in consultation with the respective Boards. Acts, 1918, Art. 37, IIb.

ARTICLE 7

No one shall be called to the Ministry of the Word, without his being stationed in a particular place, except he be sent to do church extension work.

Synodical decisions regarding Home Missions.

1. Since "ignorance and consequent lack of sympathy makes for poor giving," the Synod of 1912 instructed the Committee for the General Fund: energet-

ically and continuously to plead the cause of needy Classes in our church papers and to maintain constant contact with Classes and consistories in order that these where they are slow to apply themselves, are urged to more zeal in giving help where there is need. Acts, Art. 28, 2, 1.

2. The Synod of 1912 also found it necessary to urge that 1, d of the General Rules, accepted by the Synod of 1908 (Acts, Art. 53), be strictly observed, so that of the three collections taken for Home Missions, the last two are turned into the General Fund.

3. To prevent the scattering of our people the Synods of 1902, 1914, and 1916 decided the following:

(a) At every classical meeting the question shall be asked whether there are names of non-resident members or baptized members to report to the Classis (Acts 1902, Art. 29).

(b) Further regulations in this matter were given by the Synod of 1914 (Acts, Art. 24, 2). These rules, together with the changes made by the Synod of 1916, are as follows:

1) A general warning be given in our churches against removal to different localities in search of riches when not well informed and to consider the prospects as regards ecclesiastical and spiritual ministrations.

2) Since the removal of our people to different localities can not and should not be prevented, Synod appoints a committee of five persons of whom one shall be from the Northwest and one from the Southwest of our country (Acts 1916, Art. 23, II), with instruc-

tion to prevent as much as possible that such removal result in scattering.

3) The work of this committee shall be:

a) To gather information concerning the spiritual and material conditions of the settlements;

b) To furnish the needed information in the church papers and also thru personal correspondence regarding both the spiritual and the material conditions of the settlements in order in this way to give guidance to prospective settlers, and to prevent as much as possible scattering, financial disappointment and spiritual ruin.

c) To request consistories that they urge prospective settlers to seek information from this Committee, also to request consistories to inform the secretary of the Committee as soon as possible of the removal of their members, together with their names and addresses.

d) To keep the Classical Home Mission Committee informed as much as possible with respect to the names and addresses of all who remove to different localities and of the scattered.

e) To advertise themselves repeatedly in the church papers as the **"Bureau of Information for Settlers,"** with the request to all interested parties to seek their advice. (Acts 1916, Art. 23, II.)

4) The expenses connected with this work shall be paid out of the General Home Mission Fund.

4. **Church Help** is a Fund that has for its purpose to aid weak congregations in obtaining and maintaining church property, by lending money without interest to them, secured by a legal receipt and on condition of an annual payment of 5%. It is governed by three delegates, to be appointed by each Synod, to whom request for aid, approved by Classis, must be submitted. Every congregation must take a collection for this Fund once per year in September, or at the latest in October, while gifts and bequests are also thankfully received by the delegates. (Acts 1892, Art. 37b; Acts 1894, Art. 78; Acts 1906, Art. 76. Rules for Church Help, page 85.)

5. Congregations that are indebted to this Fund and pay no attention to it, shall be notified and in name of the Synod be requested to fulfill their obligations (Acts 1914, Art. 17, 3.)

6. **Immigrants.** The Classes Hackensack and Hudson are laboring among the Immigrants and Seamen at Hoboken and Ellis Island and receive financial aid for this work from the General Home Mission Fund. (Acts 1910, Art. 21.)

7. **South America.** Since 1908 financial aid is given from Synod to Synod to those in South America who are of common stock and faith with us who need help for their religious interests. The Synod of 1912 gave the following instruction to the Delegates who must devote themselves to this matter in consultation with the delegates of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands:

(a) To request all our consistories in name of Synod to take a collection for the brethren in Argentine.

(b) To aid the Argentinian colonies with advice as much as necessary and possible (Acts 1908, Art. 38, 5; Acts 1910, Art. 29; Acts 1912, Art. 28, II; Acts 1914, Art. 24, IV; Acts 1916, Art. 23, III).

ARTICLE 8

Persons who have not pursued the regular course of study in preparation for the Ministry of the Word, and have therefore not been declared eligible according to Article 4, shall not be admitted to the Ministry unless there is assurance of their exceptional gifts, godliness, humility, modesty, common sense and discretion, as also gifts of public address. When such persons present themselves for the Ministry, the Classis (if the [particular] Synod approve) shall first examine them, and further deal with them as it shall deem edifying, according to the general regulations of the churches.

The examination of candidates for the ministry under this article differs from the regular examinations only by the omission of the Hebrew and the Greek.

ARTICLE 9

Preachers without fixed charge, or others who have left some sect, shall not be admitted to the Ministry in the Church until they have been declared eligible, after careful examination, by the Classis, with the approval of Synod.

ARTICLE 10

A Minister, once lawfully called, may not leave the congregation with which he is connected, to

accept a call elsewhere, without the consent of the Consistory, together with the Deacons, and knowledge on the part of the Classis; likewise no other church may receive him until he has presented a proper certificate of dismission from the church and the Classis where he served.

ARTICLE 11

On the other hand, the Consistory, as representing the congregation, shall also be bound to provide for the proper support of its Ministers, and shall not dismiss them from service without the knowledge and approbation of the Classis and of the Delegates of the (particular) Synod.

When a minister accepts a call to another church, he requests of his consistory proper credentials testifying to his faithful service and to the acquiescence of the consistory in his departure. These credentials are sent to the classical committee of the Classis in which he labors for examination and approval, and are by them to be forwarded to the classical committee of the Classis of the church whither he is going. After examination and approval this committee sends the credentials to the counselor who, upon finding the documents in good and regular order, proceeds to his installation. If the Classis happens to be in session, then it must perform this work. If the minister remains in the same Classis then the approbation of that Classis only or of its classical committee is required.

ARTICLE 12

Inasmuch as a Minister of the Word, once lawfully called as described above, is bound to the service of the Church for life, he is not allowed to

enter upon a secular vocation except for such weighty reasons as shall receive the approval of the Classis.

ARTICLE 13

Ministers, who by reason of age, sickness, or otherwise, are rendered incapable of performing the duties of their Office, shall nevertheless retain the honor and title of a Minister, and the Church which they have served shall provide honorably for them in their need (likewise for the orphans and widows of Ministers) out of a common fund of the Churches, according to the general ecclesiastical ordinances in this matter.

Rules and Regulations are in preparation by a Synodical Committee.

If any Minister of the Word by reason of age, sickness or otherwise, is unable to perform his duties, his request for emeritation is presented by him to his consistory and by them to Classis, which decides on it, subject to the approval of Synod. Acts 1914, Art. 17 and 72.

ARTICLE 14

If any Minister, for the aforesaid or any other reason, is compelled to discontinue his service for a time, which shall not take place without the advice of the Consistory, he shall nevertheless at all times be and remain subject to the call of the congregation.

ARTICLE 15

No one shall be permitted, neglecting the Ministry of his Church or being without a fixed charge,

to preach indiscriminately without the consent and authority of Synod or Classis. Likewise, no one shall be permitted to preach or administer the Sacraments in another Church without the consent of the Consistory of that Church.

1. A consistory shall not admit to its pulpit a minister outside of our denomination except when they are convinced that such a minister is of sound Reformed confession. Acts, 1904, Art. 125-5.

2. a) As to his membership a candidate is under the supervision of the consistory of the church to which he belongs, but with regard to his labors as a candidate he is subject to the supervision of the Classis in whose district he labors.

   b) Those who formerly served the church as ministers must either be declared emeriti or the Classis must assume responsibility for them. Acts, 1904, Art. 126-7.

ARTICLE 16

The office of the Minister is to continue in prayer and in the Ministry of the Word, to dispense the Sacraments, to watch over his brethren, the Elders and Deacons, as well as the Congregation, and finally, with the Elders, to exercise church discipline and to see to it that everything is done decently and in good order.

ARTICLE 17

Among the Ministers of the Word equality shall be maintained with respect to the duties of their office and also in other matters as far as possible according to the judgment of the Consistory,

and if necessary, of the Classis; which equality shall also be maintained in the case of the Elders and the Deacons.

ARTICLE 18

The office of the Professors of Theology is to expound the Holy Scriptures and to vindicate sound doctrine against heresies and errors.

For the training for the Ministry of the Word, the Christian Reformed Church has the Theological School and Calvin College. Calvin College is open also to other students besides those studying for the ministry. The Synod of 1920 decided to discontinue the Preparatory Department: the first two years immediately, the third year in 1921, and the fourth year in 1922. The Seminary Preparatory Course of the Preparatory Department was continued until 1924.

All matters pertaining to these institutions are found in their Constitutions, Rules and Regulations.

A. **Curatorium.**

The care of these Institutions is entrusted to the Curatorium whose members consist of two delegates nominated by each Classis and elected by Synod. The duties of this body are described in the "Rules for the Curatorium."

B. **Professors.**

I. Theological Professors. Acts 1914, Art. 29-2.

1. a) Whenever such a professor is to be appointed the Curators of the various Classes shall note who are mentioned in their respective Classes as being fit for this position, that they may propose such names at the meeting of the Curatorium.

b) The aggregate thus obtained shall be discussed at the meeting of the Curatorium and in this discussion the advice of the theological professors shall be sought. After this discussion and consultation, the Curatorium shall proceed to make a nomination from this aggregate.

c) From this nomination Synod elects a professor.

2. The Professors of Theology are appointed as much as possible for definite departments. In the branches which they teach they must meet the requirements set at other institutions of learning of the same standing in our country. Acts 1910, Art. 56.

3. The installation of the professors of theology takes place according to the form (Acts 1906, Art. 35-5a), after they shall have signed the Formula of Subscription.

4. Emeritus Professors who were honorably retired and who received a definite appointment, are entitled to a pension from the churches, since they, just as the ministers, devote all their gifts and talents entirely and exclusively to the service of the Church. Acts 1916, Art. 20-4.

II. College Professors.

Since the appointment of professors by Synod, which does not meet until June, leads to practical difficulties both for the School and for the persons involved, the appointment or re-appointment of professors for the College is entrusted to the Curatorium. At the regular meeting in June the Curatorium shall decide as to the desirability of a special meeting during the last week of February, so that by the first

of March provision may be made in eventual vacancies. Acts 1914, Art. 39-1.

C. **Educational Secretary.** Acts 1912, Art. 36, ii.

The appointment of the Educational Secretary is permanent, and in case of eventual separation of College and Seminary, he remains in the service of the Church. In this manner the official position of the Secretary is guaranteed.

D. **Candidates for the Ministry.**

1. Inasmuch as the Church has as a rule entrusted the candidature for the ministry to the Curatorium, everyone who desires to serve our Church must enter the ministry in this manner. Students, having studied in institutions not positively Reformed, must have attended the classes in theology in our own institution for at least one year. Acts 1900, Art. 39, ix.

2. If anyone being declared a candidate does not receive a call within three years and yet desires that his relation be continued, he shall apply to the Classis to which he belongs, that said Classis may decide whether his candidature be prolonged. Acts 1910, Art. 67 xi.

ARTICLE 19

The Churches shall exert themselves, as far as necessary, that there may be students supported by them to be trained for the Ministry of the Word.

Every Classis has its own "Student Fund" and the matters of this Fund are regulated by Classis itself. Acts 1888, Art. 66.

ARTICLE 20

Students who have received permission according to the rule in this matter, and persons who have according to Article 8 been judged competent to be prepared for the Ministry of the Word, shall, for their own training, and for the sake of becoming known to the Congregations, be allowed to speak a word of edification in the meetings for public worship.

Acts 1920, Art. 29-1.

a) If theological students desire to take post-graduate work at other institutions, they should inform the Board of Trustees to that effect.

b) As long as they continue their study elsewhere they should annually apply to the Board of Trustees for renewal of the privilege of "speaking unto edification in the meetings for public worship."

c) When they desire to consider a call they must notify the Board of Trustees which shall act according to the Rules and Regulations established by Synod.

ARTICLE 21

The Consistories shall see to it that there are good Christian Schools where the parents have their children instructed according to the demands of the Covenant.

ARTICLE 22

The Elders shall be chosen by the judgment of the Consistory and the Deacons according to the regulations for that purpose established by the

Consistory. In pursuance of these regulations, every church shall be at liberty, according to its circumstances, to give the members an opportunity to direct attention to suitable persons, in order that the Consistory may thereupon either present to the congregation for election as many elders as are needed, that they may, after they are approved by it, unless any obstacle arise, be installed with public prayers and stipulations; or present a double number to the congregation and thereupon install the one-half chosen by it, in the aforesaid manner, agreeably to the Form for this purpose.

Nominations and congregational meetings must be announced two successive Sundays.

ARTICLE 23

The office of the Elders, in addition to what was said in Article 16 to be their duty in common with the Minister of the Word, is to take heed that the Ministers, together with their fellow-Elders and the Deacons, faithfully discharge their office, and both before and after the Lord's Supper, as time and circumstances may demand, for the edification of the churches to visit the families of the Congregation, in order particularly to comfort and instruct the members, and also to exhort others in respect to the Christian Religion.

ARTICLE 24

The Deacons shall be chosen, approved and installed in the same manner as was stated concerning the Elders.

ARTICLE 25

The office peculiar to the Deacons is diligently to collect alms and other contributions of charity, and after mutual counsel, faithfully and diligently to distribute the same to the poor as their needs may require it; to visit and comfort the distressed and to exercise care that the alms are not misused; of which they shall render an account in Consistory, and also (if anyone desires to be present) to the Congregation, at such a time as the Consistory may see fit.

Synod urges the Classes to impress earnestly upon delinquent congregations their duty to remember the poor, if necessary also those in other congregations, and to attend to the development of the deaconate and to proper correspondence between deaconries.

Acts 1910, Art. 17, xvii.

ARTICLE 26

In places where others are devoting themselves to the care of the poor, the Deacons shall seek a mutual understanding with them to the end that the alms may all the better be distributed among those who have greatest need. Moreover, they shall make it possible for the poor to make use of institutions of mercy, and to that end they shall request the Board of Directors of such institutions to keep in close touch with them. It is also desirable that the Deaconates assist and consult one another, especially in caring for the poor in such institutions.

ARTICLE 27

The Elders and Deacons shall serve two or more years according to local regulations, and a proportionate number shall retire each year. The retiring officers shall be succeeded by others unless the circumstances and the profit of any church, in the execution of Articles 22 and 24, render a re-election advisable.

Definite retirement according to Art. 27 must be the rule, but the liberty of renominating those that retire as permitted in that article must remain

a) since the Church is served best by the best gifts and talents;

b) since the retiring officers often through experience have acquired greater fitness;

c) since in most churches there is not available a sufficient supply of qualified men that the retiring members can be left out of consideration without loss to the church. Acts 1898, Art. 50-1.

The Synod of 1912 decided that in case the installation of newly elected Elders and Deacons must for weighty reasons be postponed, the tenure of the retiring Elders and Deacons is extended, and they remain legal trustees of the church.

ARTICLE 28

The Consistory shall take care, that the churches for the possession of their property, and the peace and order of their meetings can claim the protection of the Authorities; it should be well understood, however, that for the sake of peace and material possession they may never suffer the royal government of Christ over His Church to be in the least infringed upon.

OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL ASSEMBLIES.

ARTICLE 29

Four kinds of ecclesiastical assemblies shall be maintained: the Consistory, the Classis (the Particular Synod), and the General Synod.

ARTICLE 30

In these assemblies ecclesiastical matters only shall be transacted and that in an ecclesiastical manner. In major assemblies only such matters shall be dealt with as could not be finished in minor assemblies, or such as pertain to the Churches of the major assembly in common.

ARTICLE 31

If any one complain that he has been wronged by the decision of a minor assembly, he shall have the right to appeal to a major ecclesiastical assembly, and whatever may be agreed upon by a majority vote shall be considered settled and binding, unless it be proved to conflict with the Word of God or with the Articles of the Church Order, as long as they are not changed by a General Synod.

Ecclesiastical Usage.

Appeal from a decision by any ecclesiastical assembly must be made before the first following meeting of the major ecclesiastical assembly appealed to and notice sent of this appeal to the clerk of the minor assembly. The interested parties must be informed of every decision made.

ARTICLE 32

The proceedings of all assemblies shall begin by calling upon the Name of God and be closed with thanksgiving.

ARTICLE 33

Those who are delegated to the assemblies shall bring with them their credentials and instructions, signed by those sending them, and they shall have a vote in all matters, except such as particularly concern their persons or churches.

To promote uniformity, the printed credentials as authorized by Synod (Acts 1888, Art. 87), shall be used, or at least written credentials concluding as follows: "with instruction and authority to take part in the consideration of all matters legally brought before the meeting according to God's Word and the interpretation of it embodied in the forms of unity and the accepted Church Order."

ARTICLE 34

In all assemblies there shall be not only a president, but also a clerk to keep a faithful record of all important matters.

Acts 1904, Art. 132-7. Major assemblies have also a "stated clerk," who, however, has not the function of a permanent clerk, not being an officer, but that of a delegate whose regular duties are three-fold: He inscribes the minutes, he attends to all official correspondence, and he prepares the Agendum.

ARTICLE 35

The office of the president is to state and ex-

plain the business to be transacted, to see to it that everyone observe due order in speaking; to silence the captious and those who are vehement in speaking; and to properly discipline them if they refuse to listen. Furthermore his office shall cease when the assembly arises.

ARTICLE 36

The Classis has the same jurisdiction over the Consistory as the Particular Synod has over the Classis and the General Synod over the Particular.

ARTICLE 37

In all Churches there shall be a Consistory composed of the Ministers of the Word and the Elders, who at least in larger congregations, shall, as a rule, meet once a week. The Minister of the Word (or the Ministers, if there be more than one, in turn) shall preside and regulate the proceedings. Wherever the number of Elders is small, the Deacons may be added to the Consistory by local regulation; this shall invariably be the rule where the number is less than three.

Acts 1908, Art. 54, xi, and Acts 1912, Art. 57, xvii.

1. With a view to the danger that catechetical instruction may be relegated to the background or wholly neglected, Synod appeals to all Classes and consistories most earnestly and urgently to guard against the danger as much as possible.

2. Henceforth an extra copy of the Acts shall be sent to every consistory especially designed for the consistorial archives. Acts 1916, Art. 55.

3. Acts 1914, Art. 17-9. In the interest of good order the consistories shall report each year on the exact number of families; the stated clerk shall keep accurate record of these reports; these statistics shall be read to the Classis; the assessment for the Theological School, Emeriti Fund and Synodical Expenses shall be made accordingly and the stated clerk shall forward these statistics to Synod.

Rules for Congregational Meetings as sanctioned by Usage.

Inasmuch as congregational meetings are called by and in charge of the consistory, the president and clerk of the consistory shall function as such at these meetings.

Only such matters as are presented by the consistory shall be acted upon at these congregational meetings.

When members of the congregation desire to have any matters presented to the congregational meeting, they shall first submit them to the consistory so that this body may judge whether and in what manner these matters are to be submitted to the congregational meeting.

ARTICLE 38

In places where the Consistory is to be constituted for the first time or anew, this shall not take place except with the advice of the Classis.

Acts 1908, Art. 54, ii. In case of the organization of a new congregation within the limits of an existing local church, the consent of the local consistory must first be obtained and then also that of the Classis. Naturally the consistory has the right to withhold its consent. In that case, however, the interested parties have the right of appeal to Classis, and if need be, to Synod, with whom the final decision rests, while in the meanwhile the status quo remains unchanged.

Usual Manner of Procedure in the Organization of New Congregations.

1. Such members of the church as desire the organization of a church in a different locality present their petition for organization to the Classis. All heads of families and single members sign such a petition.
2. The Classis considers whether such organization is possible and desirable in the light of the proximity of other churches and the presence of properly qualified persons for the offices. In case the Classis decides to grant the request, a classical committee is appointed to effect the organization.
3. The committee meets with those interested after these have obtained their letters of dismission from their respective churches. After public worship, under the auspices of said committee, the letters of dismission are handed in and accepted, when in good and regular order, election of all officers takes place and they are at once installed in their respective offices.
4. The election of the officers is by free ballot by the male members whose letters of dismission have been accepted. According to the rule of free balloting a two-third vote is required for election on the first ballot. For the other ballots a majority is sufficient.
5. The Articles of Incorporation of the new organization are then to be executed before a Notary Public at this meeting.

ARTICLE 39

Places where as yet no Consistory can be constituted shall be placed under the care of a neighboring Consistory.

Acts 1908, Art. 54, vi. If possible, the organization of a new congregation must precede the administration of

the sacraments. If, however, conditions are not ripe for organization, the eventual members are to be enrolled in a neighboring church and under the supervision of its consistory the sacraments may be administered in their midst, not, however, without preaching of the Word nor without a suitable representation of the consistory for the purpose of supervision.

ARTICLE 40

The Deacons shall meet, wherever necessary, every week to transact the business pertaining to their office, calling upon the Name of God; whereunto the Ministers shall take good heed and if necessary they shall be present.

ARTICLE 41

The classical meetings shall consist of neighboring churches that respectively delegate, with proper credentials, a minister and an elder to meet at such time and place as was determined by the previous classical meeting. Such meetings shall be held at least once in three months, unless great distances render this inadvisable. In these meetings the ministers shall preside in rotation, or one shall be chosen to preside; however, the same minister shall not be chosen twice in succession.

Furthermore, the president shall, among other things, put the following questions to the delegates of each church.

1. Are the consistory meetings held in your church?

2. Is church discipline exercised?

3. Are the poor and the Christian schools cared for?

4. Do you need the judgment and help of the Classis for the proper government of your church?

And finally, at one but the last meeting and, if necessary, at the last meeting before the (Particular) Synod, delegates shall be chosen to attend said Synod.

No new Classis shall be organized without the consent of Synod. A. B. Art. 11.

Every congregation within the synodically prescribed boundaries for a separate Classis shall delegate a minister and an elder to the Classis, and in case the church is vacant, two elders. A. B. Art. 10.

At every classical meeting investigation shall be made whether the various churches are laboring to execute the decision of Synod of 1898, Art. 94, that the so-called baptized-member-system may be abolished in our churches. Acts 1902, Art. 128-3.

Consistories shall report the names and addresses of their non-resident members and baptized members to the mission committee of their Classis. At every classical meeting they shall be reminded of this matter. Acts 1902, Art. 29-i.

The Synod of 1902 deemed it advisable that a larger number of ministers be given opportunity, through alternating synodical delegation, for active participation in the affairs of our Church, but it established no rule in this matter. Art. 103-6.

Whenever a consistory or Classis delegates some one who declares that he cannot afford the loss of wages incident upon attendance at the meeting, the delegating assembly shall, if not releasing him, attend to the necessary compensation. Acts 1902, Art. 132-6.

ARTICLE 42

Where in a church there are more Ministers than one, also those not delegated according to the foregoing article shall have the right to attend Classis with advisory vote.

ARTICLE 43

At the close of the Classical and other major assemblies, Censure shall be exercised over those, who in the meeting have done something worthy of punishment, or who have scorned the admonition of the minor assemblies.

ARTICLE 44

The Classis shall authorize at least two of her oldest, most experienced and competent Ministers to visit all the Churches once a year and to take heed whether the Minister and the Consistory faithfully perform the duties of their office, adhere to sound doctrine, observe in all things the adopted order, and properly promote as much as lies in them, through word and deed, the upbuilding of the congregation, in particular of the youth, to the end that they may in time fraternally admonish those who have in anything been negligent, and may by their advice and assistance help direct all things unto peace, upbuilding, and greatest profit of the churches. And each Classis may continue these visitors in service as long as it sees fit, except where the visitors themselves request to be released for reasons of which the Classis shall judge.

ARTICLE 45

It shall be the duty of the church in which the Classis and likewise the (Particular) or General Synod meets to furnish the following meeting with the minutes of the preceding.

ARTICLE 46

Instructions concerning matters to be considered in major assemblies shall not be written until the decision of previous Synods touching these matters have been read, in order that what was once decided be not again proposed, unless a revision be deemed necessary.

ARTICLE 47

(Every year [or if need be oftener] four or five or more neighboring Classes shall meet as a Particular Synod, to which each Classis shall delegate two Ministers and two Elders. At the close of both the Particular and the General Synod,some church shall be empowered to determine with advice of Classis, the time and place of the next Synod.)

ARTICLE 48

(Each Synod shall be at liberty to solicit and hold correspondence with its neighboring Synod or Synods, in such manner as they shall judge most conducive to general edification.)

ARTICLE 49

(Each Synod shall delegate some to execute everything ordained by Synod both as to what

pertains to the Government and to the respective Classes, resorting under it, and likewise to supervise together or in smaller number all examinations of future Ministers. And, moreover, in all other eventual difficulties they shall extend help to the Classes in order that proper unity, order and soundness of doctrine may be maintained and established. Also they shall keep proper record of all their actions to report thereof to Synod, and if it be demanded, give reasons. They shall also not be discharged from their service before and until Synod itself discharges them.)

ARTICLE 50

The General Synod shall ordinarily meet once every two years unless there be urgent need to shorten the time.

To this Synod three Ministers and three Elders out of every Classis shall be delegated. If it becomes necessary in the opinion of at least three Classes to call a meeting of Synod within two years, the local church designated for this purpose shall determine time and place.

Synod shall meet according to rule on the third Wednesday of June in the even years. Acts 1894, Art. 145.

When a Classis desires an early Synod it must apply to the convening church, who applies to its Classis, and whenever two neighboring Classes deem it necessary, an early Synod shall be convened. Acts 1910, Art. 67, xiii.

The Synodical Agendum must be published in the beginning of May and hence all matters for Synod must be sent in to the stated clerk before the first day of May. Acts 1900, Art. 99, xviii.

As much as possible the rule shall be adhered to that no proposals of importance shall be presented to Synod that have not appeared on the Agendum, so that consistories and Classes may have opportunity for previous deliberation. Acts 1904, Art. 112.

All committees shall publish their reports for the information of the churches, six months before Synod convenes.

All reports of advisory committees, prepared for Synod, on subjects committed to them for special study, shall be inserted from the "Wachter", "Banner", and "Reformirte Bote", in the Agendum. Acts 1910, Art. 67, iii.

Usages and Rules for Synod.

On the evening preceding the Synod a synodical prayer-meeting shall be held in the place of assembly, led by the President or Vice-President of the preceding Synod, who shall also deliver a sermon appropriate to the occasion. (Rules of Order, Art. 1.)

Synod is led by the President according to the existing Rules of Order. The following particulars have become usage or have been officially adopted:

1. At the appointed time and place the President of the former Synod or his substitute calls the delegates to order; he opens with prayer, the reading of Scripture, and an address, and presides over the acceptance of the credentials and the election of officers.
2. After the elected officers have taken their place, the members rise and listen to the reading of the Public Declaration by the newly-elected President and after the conclusion of this ceremony they declare their agreement with the Three Forms of Unity by answering "yes" to the appertaining question of the President. This Declaration of Agreement is asked separately of each delegate that may arrive later. (Acts 1902, Art. 103, Page 54.)

3. All motions that are laid before the meeting must be translated into English for the benefit of the American brethren present. The President shall attend to the translation. (Acts 1904, Art. 30; Art. 52, Church Order.)

4. a) The Synod meets on Wednesday morning for the purpose of the election of its officers and the appointment of a Committee for Advisory Committees. Synod then adjourns to enable this Committee to meet.

   b) On Wednesday afternoon Synod meets again to approve the report of the Committee for Advisory Committees. Synod then adjourns until Friday morning to enable the Advisory Committees to prepare their reports.

   c) The reports of the Advisory Committees are presented as soon as possible to the Committee for Publications, who see to it that all reports are neatly printed and distributed to the delegates. Acts 1918, Art. 52, iii.

Advisory Members of Synod.

The Professors of the Theological School shall be accorded a seat as well as all the delegates, but only with advisory vote. The privileges of the floor shall be given to delegates from affiliated churches and may be given to guests who are members of the Church. Acts 1888, Art. 8.

The Synod shall no longer give an advisory vote on the floor of the Synod to the professors of Calvin College, but shall invite only the President of the College to be present and give him an advisory vote in all matters pertaining to the College. Acts 1920, Art. 11.

When reporters of delegations and committees are not delegated to Synod, they shall be advisory members of the committees appointed for the matters they report on and also of the Synod while their reports are being discussed. Acts 1904, Art. 15.

Reports.

a. All reports not appearing in the Agendum must be laid before Synod in printed form. Copies of the reports of the Advisory Committee also must be laid before the meeting, printed or otherwise.

b. All reports submitted to Synod must be incorporated in the Acts unless otherwise decided.

c. The committees themselves determine whether their reporters are to represent them at Synod. Acts 1920, p. 27-3.

All matters considered in committee of the whole must be inscribed in the minutes but shall not be included in the printed Acts of Synod. The disposition shall be left to the officers. Acts 1894, Art. 74.

The final draft of the Acts and the decision as to what is to be placed in the Supplements rests, since 1886, with the officers. The Stated Clerk prepares them for the press and is also entrusted with their publication and mailing. Every office-bearer of our churches receives a copy. Acts 1904, Art. 111.

For the benefit of our American and German churches an extract of the Minutes is published in "The Banner" and "Reformirte Bote," in the last-named paper at the usual rates. Acts 1904, Art. 111.

The Synodical Committee is composed of three members to be appointed at each Synod for a term of two years, with the Stated Clerk as member ex-officio and secretary.

A Synodical Treasurer is appointed at each Synod for the term of two years to administer its finances and to submit to every Synod a plan for the distribution of its expenses among the several Classes. The treasurers of the general Church funds and their alternates are appointed by the respective committees. These treasurers:

a. receive the collections and contributions through the Classical treasurers and render an account of them per Classis once a month;

b. upon receipt, send at their earliest convenience a postal card receipt, mentioning the number of "De Wachter" in which publication is to be made;

c. at the annual meeting they submit an annual report containing a statement of the contribution of each Classis, and a detailed account of disbursements. The proper committees, after approving these reports, publish them in "De Wachter" and "The Banner."

The respective secretaries must incorporate these reports in their reports to Synod. Acts 1908, Art. 17-2-3.

In the constitutions of the various committees an article shall be inserted requiring every secretary to keep a duplicate record of all receipts and disbursements.

Auditing Committee.

An auditing committee shall be appointed by each Synod to examine the books of the Treasurer of all synodical funds. Acts 1918, Art. 27-4.

Fiscal Year.

The fiscal year runs from January 1 to December 31. Acts 1920, Art. 43-19.

Standing Committees are chosen in their entirety by each Synod to serve till the next Synod. Acts 1898, Art. 98.

Church Papers.

For the supervision of our Church Papers, "The Banner" and "De Wachter", the Synod appoint a committee of seven members incorporated as "The Publication Committee of the Christian Reformed Church." Four members of this committee are chosen by one Synod and three by the following.

RULES FOR CHURCH VISITATION

GENERAL RULES

Church Visitation that according to Art. 44 of the Church Order must be made annually in the congregation, requires for its orderly procedure the following:

a. Every Classis appoints from its midst two members and an equal number of alternates, with the instruction to examine the conditions of the congregations within its boundaries.

b. The visitors notify the consistory at least eight days beforehand of the day and the hour of their arrival.

c. All members of the consistory see to it that they attend the meeting designed for church-visitation. Every member that remains absent is bound to give the reason of his absence to this meeting. If not one-half of the members are present, no church-visitation can be made.

d. The president of the consistory sees to it that all the books of the congregation are present at the meeting for examination of the visitors.

e. One of the visitors functions as president and the other as clerk of the consistory, and in the church to which either belongs, he takes his seat with the members of the consistory and the other one functions as president and clerk both.

THE EXAMINATION

Questions to the Complete Consistory

a. Have you two preaching services regularly on the Sabbath, once from a text freely chosen, and once

after the order of the Heidelberg Catechism, so that no Lord's Day is omitted?

b. Does the consistory determine the matter to be read in the absence of a minister?

c. Is Communion celebrated at least four times annually after a preparatory sermon and followed by an applicatory sermon?

d. Is family-, sick-, and poor visiting regularly made by the members of the consistory according to the requirements of their offices?

e. Does the consistory attend to it that catechetical instruction is given regularly?

f. Are the members of the consistory elected according to the Church Order, and in case of retirement, does this take place according to the established order?

g. Have the forms of unity been subscribed by all the members of the consistory, minister, elders and deacons, and when there is a church-school, by the principal?

h. Does the consistory meet at regular intervals according to the need of the congregation and are the acts properly recorded and kept?

i. Are all matters that come up considered according to the ecclesiastical rules?

j. Is church discipline exercised faithfully according to the Word of God and the rules of the Church?

k. Is censura morum held among the members of the consistory before every administration of the Lord's Supper?

l. Do the parents see to it that their children make use as much as possible of the schools that are in harmony with Christian Reformed principles?

m. Are moneys and deeds of property of the administration of the church as well as of the poor thus kept in a safe place, that there can be no cause of distrust, nor difficulties in case of retirement or death?

n. Is the church active according to ability for the extension of the Kingdom within as well as without its boundaries?

o. Is the spiritual condition of the congregation satisfactory? Are unity, peace and love present?

p. Do the children of the congregation quite generally assume their prerogatives and responsibilities as they come to years of discretion?

q. Are the collections as prescribed by Classis and Synod taken according to the respective rules?

r. Is the consistory aware whether there are any members of secret organizations in the congregation, and if so, are they disciplined?

s. Are you engaged in the abolition of the so-called baptized-member-system?

Questions to the Elders and Deacons, while the Minister or Ministers are Absent

a. Is the minister faithful to the Word of God and the Church Order in the exercise of the Ministry of the Word and in the administration of the Sacraments?

b. Does he regularly give catechetical instruction, does he visit the sick faithfully and does he attend to family visiting with the aid of the elders?

c. Does he manifest himself in his family and public life as a godly man, and does he study diligently?

d. Does he use the Forms of the Church in the exercise of his office and does he conduct public worship unto edification?

e. Has he a sufficient income corresponding to the needs of a well-ordered family?

Questions to the Minister or Ministers and Deacons in the absence of Elders

a. Do the elders regularly attend the congregational gatherings and the consistory meetings?

b. Do they assist the pastor faithfully in all things?

c. Do they visit the congregation as much as possible and do they endeavor to prevent or to remove all offense?

d. Do they visit the catechetical classes from time to time to see how they are conducted and attended, and when necessary do they assist the pastor in catechetical instruction?

e. Do they conduct themselves in their family and public life as examples for the congregation?

Questions to the Minister or Ministers and Elders in the absence of the Deacons

a. Do the deacons attend regularly the congregational meetings and the meetings of the consistory, and if there are such, also the deacons' meetings?

b. Do they faithfully discharge their duties to the poor and the orphans?

c. Are the collections counted in the presence of the minister or of one or more of the elders?

d. Do they administer the funds with discretion in consultation with the minister and elders; do they make double entry of the receipts and disbursements and do they give an account of these at set times?

e. Do they show themselves in their family and public life as exemplary christians?

At the conclusion of their visitation of all the churches, the Visitors shall prepare a report of their findings and acts and submit it to the first meeting of Classis.

ARTICLE 51

The Missionary Work of the Church is regulated by the General Synod in a Mission Order.

Missionaries:—

The calling and sending of Missionary Ministers shall be the task of a local church—if, however, circumstances demand, the calling and sending is to be done by a combination of churches in the manner determined by these churches themselves, subject to the stipulation of Synod and Classis. Acts 1912, Art. 20.

Synod of 1918 decided, that

1. Separation of the official and the membership relation in special circumstances, as in the case of our missionaries, cannot be considered contrary to Reformed Church Polity.
2. That the Reformed principles of Church Polity regarding membership as also regarding the obligations of the consistory with respect to the members and the administration of the Sacraments, demand that our missionaries in our present mission field, though they must remain officially connected with the sending church, must, as members, belong to the Rehoboth congregation. Acts 1918, Art. 52, p. 57, (1)-(2).

Lay-Workers:—

Inasmuch as it does not militate against Reformed Church Polity to employ unordained missionaries in the mission field, and inasmuch as there are localities in our mission field where such helpers may be used to good advantage, the employment of lay-workers for such places is to be recommended, always, however, with the consent and under the supervision of the synodical delegates; and their ecclesiastical status rests only in the mandate they have received from the sending church or churches. Acts 1914, Art. 52, ii, 3.

Fields: (Jews, Mormons, Heathen)—

Jews. The missionary work among the Jews has been delegated to the Classes Hackensack and Hudson, and the Classis Illinois. These labor respectively in the cities of Paterson, N. J., and Chicago, Ill. These Classes have charge of all the work in their respective fields, according to Rules approved by the Synod of 1918 and 1920, respectively.

Since 1918 no synodical delegates for Jewish Missions are to be appointed any more. | Only a General Treasurer and his alternate are appointed by Synod. Acts 1918, Art. 27.

Mormons. The missionary work among the Mormons has been delegated to the Classis Pella. In case Classis Pella intends to continue the work, Synod advises that an ordained Minister of the Word be called for that field, and pledges the support for this mission as formerly. Acts 1918, Art. 27-B-3.

Heathen Mission (Indian and Foreign.) For the matters of Heathen Missions Synod regularly appoints a Delegation consisting of one member from each Classis to serve for the term of two years. This Delegation chooses from their own number an Executive Committee, that attends to urgent matters. Acts 1914, Art. 52-ii-1.

The various mission posts are under the supervision of the sending churches touching confession and life of the missionary force, and also of the converts, together with the ordering of internal affairs. Cf. Rules.

China:—

Our Church commences its missionary work in China, and not in the Sudan. Acts 1920, Art. 34-2.

Our missionaries are to labor during the first two or four years preferably in consultation with a Church of Reformed Confession in the mission field. Acts 1920, Art. 34-4.

Director of Missions:—

Synod appoints a Secretary of Missions especially connected with the Board of Heathen Missions, but also charged to plead for and promote the interests of the Home and Jewish Missions. Acts 1920, Art. 34-8. His work is described in the Rules for Director of Missions.

ARTICLE 52

Inasmuch as different languages are spoken in the churches, the necessary translations shall be made in the ecclesiastical assemblies, and in the publication of recommendations, instructions and decisions.

OF DOCTRINES, SACRAMENTS AND OTHER CEREMONIES.

ARTICLE 53

The Ministers of the Word of God and likewise the Professors of Theology (which also behooves the other Professors and School Teachers) shall subscribe to the Three Formulas of Unity, namely, the Belgic Confession of Faith, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of Dordrecht, 1618-'19, and the Ministers of the Word who refuse to do so shall de facto be suspended from their office by the Consistory or Classis until they shall have given a full statement, and if they obstinately persist in refusing, they shall be deposed from their office.

The Formula of Subscription for Ministers, etc., must be inscribed in the Consistorial as well as in the Classical Minute Book. It is also customary that candidates sign it after passing their classical examination. Acts 1906, Art. 35, 5b.

ARTICLE 54

Likewise the Elders and Deacons shall subscribe to the aforesaid Formulas of Unity.

ARTICLE 55

To ward off false doctrines and errors that multiply exceedingly through heretical writings, the Ministers and Elders shall use the means of teaching, of refutation, or warning, and of admonition, as well in the Ministry of the Word as in Christian teaching and family-visiting.

ARTICLE 56

The Covenant of God shall be sealed unto the children of Christians by Baptism, as soon as the administration thereof is feasible, in the public assembly when the Word of God is preached.

Only in critical emergency and with the consent and in the presence of the consistory may Baptism be administered to sick children or adults outside of the meeting of the congregation; also it shall not be administered to condemned criminals, except with advice of classical delegates.

Baptism, administered by denominations, societies or persons that have formally broken with the trinitarian faith and manifest this rupture in the administration as often as a child is baptized, can no more be recognized as Christian Baptism. For the rest all Baptisms must be held valid, whether administered to children or to adults, whenever administered in or in behalf of a group of christians by a minister of the Word called and recognized as such by them and in the Name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. (This article of the Synod of 1899 of the Reformed Church of the Netherlands is recognized by usage in our churches.)

Parents, presenting their children for baptism according to Holy Scripture and Church Order must both, or at least one of them, have owned their own Baptism by personal profession of faith. Acts 1898, Art. 94.

Those under discipline of abstention shall not present their infants for baptism, nor answer to the questions of the Form. Acts 1892, Art. 49.

The Baptism of adopted waifs is left to the discretion of the consistories. Acts 1910, Art. 67, vi.

ARTICLE 57

The Ministers shall do their utmost to the end that the father present his child for Baptism.

ARTICLE 58

In the ceremony of Baptism, both of children and of adults, the Minister shall use the respective forms drawn up for the administration of this Sacrament.

ARTICLE 59

Adults are through Baptism incorporated into the Christian Church, and are accepted as members of the Church, and are therefore obliged also to partake of the Lord's Supper, which they shall promise to do at their Baptism.

ARTICLE 60

The names of those baptized, together with those of the parents, and likewise the date of birth and baptism, shall be recorded.

ARTICLE 61

None shall be admitted to the Lord's Supper except those who according to the usage of the Church with which they unite themselves have made a confession of the Reformed Religion, besides being reputed to be of a godly walk, without which those who come from other Churches shall not be admitted.

1. In the examination of those who desire to be admitted to the Lord's Supper, use shall be made chiefly of the Compendium. It shall be demanded of all who apply for admission that they be sound in faith and blameless in conduct, as has always been demanded in the Reformed Church. The names of those whose examination resulted favorably shall be made known to the congregation at

least one Sunday before public confession, that it may become evident whether there are objections to their admission. A. B., 56-57.

2. Synod of 1890, Art. 61, formulated the questions used at the public confession as follows:

   a) Do you acknowledge the doctrine contained in the Old and New Testaments and in the Articles of the Christian faith and taught in this christian church to be the true and complete doctrine of salvation?

   b) Have you resolved by the grace of God to adhere to this doctrine; to reject all heresies repugnant thereto and to lead a new, godly life?

   c) Will you submit to church government, and in case you should become delinquent, to Church Discipline?

All those that come to us from other denominations must be examined as to their confessional soundness and fitness to partake of Communion, because of the sanctity of the Lord's Supper. The Form of Reception is left to the discretion of the consistories. The congregation, however, must be given an opportunity to present possible objections. Acts 1904, Art. 125, 6.

In the examination by the consistory the question shall always be put to those who desire to be received as members and admitted to the Lord's Supper, whether they belong to any society bound by oath or solemn vow. Acts 1867, Art. 15.

ARTICLE 62

Every Church shall administer the Lord's Supper in such a manner as it shall judge most conducive to edification; provided, however, that the outward ceremonies as prescribed in God's Word be not changed and all superstition be avoided, and that at the conclusion of the sermon and the usual

prayers, the Form for the Administration of the Lord's Supper, together with the prayer for that purpose, shall be read.

Touching the use of the Individual Cup, Synod of 1918, Art. 42, xv, and 1920, Art. 26, 14, 15, decided:

To establish no rule in this matter, but to leave it to the discretion of the consistories.

ARTICLE 63

The Lord's Supper shall be administered at least every two or three months.

ARTICLE 64

The administration of the Lord's Supper shall take place only there where there is supervision of Elders, according to the ecclesiastical order and in a public gathering of the Congregation.

1. It is permitted to administer the Lord's Supper in the homes of those who have been ill for many years, provided the congregation be represented. Acts 1914, Art. 19.
2. The administration of the Lord's Supper must always be preceded by a Preparatory sermon and followed by an Applicatory sermon. Acts 1912, Art. 72, 9.

ARTICLE 65

Funeral sermons or funeral services shall not be introduced.

Carrying corpses into the church building at funeral services belongs to the indifferent things (Acts 1886, Art. 57, 3), and cannot as such be considered improper, but whether it is to be allowed in the congregation shall rest with the discretion of the consistory. Acts 1888, Art. 36.

ARTICLE 66

In time of war, pestilence, national calamities, and other great afflictions, the pressure of which is felt throughout the Churches, it is fitting that the Classes proclaim a Day of Prayer.

ARTICLE 67

The Churches shall observe, in addition to the Sunday, also Christmas, Good Friday, Easter, Ascension Day, Pentecost, the Day of Prayer, the National Thanksgiving Day, and Old and New Year's Day.

Sabbath Keeping. Dordrecht, 1618-'19.

1. There is in the Fourth Command of the Divine Law a ceremonial and an ethical element.
2. The ceremonial element was the Rest of the Seventh day after Creation, and the strict observance of that day imposed especially on the Jewish people.
3. The ethical element, that a certain definite day be appropriated for religion and for that purpose so much rest as is needful for religion and its hallowed contemplation.
4. The Sabbath of the Jews having been abolished, the Day of the Lord must be solemnly hallowed by the Christians.
5. The day since the times of the Apostles has already been observed by the primitive catholic church.
6. This day must be so consecrated to religion that on that day we rest from all toilsome works, except those of charity and present necessity. Also from all such recreations as hinder religion.

ARTICLE 68

The Ministers shall on Sunday explain briefly the sum of Christian Doctrine comprehended in the Heidelberg Catechism so that as much as possible the explanation shall be annually completed, according to the division of the Catechism itself, for that purpose.

With a view to dangers from without that threaten sound doctrine, and in consideration of the great need of and the very meager interest in the regular development of dogmatical truths, Synod emphasizes the time-honored custom of catechism preaching, and the Classes are urged to give proper attention to this matter, that the regular consideration of the catechism may be observed. Acts 1902, Art. 103; 110.

ARTICLE 69

In the Churches only the 150 Psalms of David, the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, the Twelve Articles of Faith, the Songs of Mary, Zacharias and Simeon, the Morning and Evening Hymns, and the Hymn of Prayer before the sermon shall be sung.

1. The U. P. edition of the Psalter is recommended for use in the American-speaking churches. Acts 1914, Art. 16.
2. For Sunday Schools and Societies that use the American language, the U. P. Bible Songs are recommended for singing.
3. Synod disapproves of a choir in public worship, not in so far as it leads the congregational singing, but when singing alone. Acts 1904, Art. 125, 11.

ARTICLE 70

Since it is proper that the matrimonial state be confirmed in the presence of Christ's Church, according to the Form for that purpose, the Consistories shall attend to it.

Marriages within the three most intimate degrees of relationship are to be condemned as improper. Those of less close blood-relationship also are to be discouraged, but touching eventual cases, the ecclesiastical assemblies concerned shall judge. Acts 1896, Art. 62, 3b.

OF CENSURE AND ECCLESIASTICAL ADMONITION.

ARTICLE 71

As Christian Discipline is of a spiritual nature, and exempts no one from Civil trial or punishment by the Authorities, so also besides Civil punishment there is need of Ecclesiastical Censures, to reconcile the sinner with the Church and his neighbor and to remove the offense out of the Church of Christ.

1. Parents that do not send their minor children to attend catechetical instruction, shall be admonished, and if they persist in their neglect they shall be disciplined, and if this is of no avail, they shall be excommunicated.
2. Parents who, for conscientious objections, dare not have their children baptized, shall be patiently instructed and admonished, and if this is of no avail, they shall be disciplined. Acts 1888, Art. 57b.
3. If it becomes manifest that a member belongs to a secret, oathbound organization, and he refuses to leave such organization, he shall be disciplined. A. B. Art. 55.

ARTICLE 72

In case any one errs in doctrine or offends in conduct as long as the sin is of a private character, not giving public offense, the rule clearly prescribed by Christ in Matth. 18 shall be followed.

ARTICLE 73

Secret sins of which the sinner repents, after

being admonished by one person in private or in the presence of two or three witnesses, shall not be laid before the Consistory.

ARTICLE 74

If any one, having been admonished in love concerning a secret sin by two or three persons, does not give heed, or otherwise has committed a public sin, the matter shall be reported to the Consistory.

Unions. Acts 1916, Art. 36, 9.

1. There are not sufficient data to show that membership of the Church is incompatible with membership of the so-called Neutral Unions, unless it can be established that a certain Union gives constitutional warrant to a certain sin or sins, or shows in its regular activities that it champions sin.
2. As long as we are not fully assured in this matter and cannot maintain the position once assumed, the present standing of many of our church-members as "tolerable" is undesirable.

Synod rules that no one can remain an object of church discipline who persists in the resignation of his membership. Acts 1918, Art. 53, iv.

Socialism.

Consistories shall assume toward Socialism the same attitude as towards all departures from our principles. Acts 1912, Art. 47, iii.

1. Those baptized in infancy, having arrived to years of discretion, but that do not make a profession of faith, regardless of their walk otherwise, become, as unfaithful baptized members, the objects of church discipline, and if they persist in their sin, are to be excluded from the church.

2. In case of change of residence, such unfaithful baptized members may not be given a letter of dismission, but at best a certificate of baptism and a statement of their conduct.

3. Before the consistory proceeds to exclusion of unfaithful baptized members:
   a) an announcement must be made to the congregation with an exhortation for intercession, and
   b) then the advice of Classis must be sought.

4. The exclusion of unfaithful baptized members ought to take place by official announcement to the church, and notice sent to the parties concerned, that they, because of their persistent unfaithfulness as members of the covenant, in spite of all ecclesiastical admonition, henceforth can no more be considered as belonging to the church.

5. Excluded unfaithful baptized members, that return with penitence and repentance, cannot be received again into the church except by profession of faith, while in every concrete case it is left to the discretion of the consistory whether a separate confession of sin shall be required. Acts 1918, Art. 52, viii-f.

Those baptized that have come to years of discretion and refuse to attend catechetical instruction, shall be admonished and if they persist, be excommunicated. A. B. Art. 62.

ARTICLE 75

The reconciliation of all such sins as are of their nature of a public character, or have become public because the admonition of the Church was despised, shall take place (upon sufficient evidence of repentance) in such a manner as the Consistory shall deem conducive to the edification of each Church. Whether in particular cases this shall

take place in public, shall, when there is a difference of opinion about it in the Consistory, be considered with the advice of two neighboring Churches or of the Classis.

In case of transgression of the Seventh Command before marriage, the form of confession is left to the discretion of the consistory, provided the confession is made at least before the whole consistory, and the names be announced to the congregation. Acts 1908, Art. 54, ix.

ARTICLE 76

Such as obstinately reject the admonition of the Consistory, and likewise those who have committed a public or otherwise gross sin, shall be suspended from the Lord's Supper. And if he, having been suspended, after repeated admonitions, shows no signs of repentance, the Consistory shall at last proceed to the extreme remedy, namely, excommunication, agreeably to the form adopted for that purpose according to the Word of God. But no one shall be excommunicated except with consent of the Classis.

ARTICLE 77

After the suspension from the Lord's Table, and subsequent admonitions, and before proceeding to excommunication, the obstinacy of the sinner shall be publicly made known to the congregation, the offense explained, together with the care bestowed upon him, in reproof, suspension from the Lord's Supper, and repeated admonition, and the congregation shall be exhorted to speak to him and to pray for him. There shall be

three such admonitions. In the first the name of the sinner shall not be mentioned that he be somewhat spared. In the second, with the consent of the Classis, his name shall be mentioned. In the third the congregation shall be informed that (unless he repent) he will be excluded from the fellowship of the Church, so that his excommunication, in case he remains obstinate, may take place with the tacit approbation of the Church. The interval between the admonitions shall be left to the discretion of the Consistory.

ARTICLE 78

Whenever anyone who has been excommunicated desires to become reconciled to the Church in the way of penitence, it shall be announced to the Congregation, either before the celebration of the Lord's Supper, or at some other opportune time, in order that (in as far as no one can mention anything against him to the contrary) he may with profession of his conversion be publicly reinstated, according to the Form for that purpose.

ARTICLE 79

When Ministers of the Divine Word, Elders or Deacons, have committed any public, gross sin, which is a disgrace to the Church, or worthy of punishment by the Authorities, the Elders and Deacons shall immediately by preceding sentence of the Consistory thereof and of the nearest Church, be suspended or expelled from their office, but the Ministers shall only be suspended.

Whether these shall be entirely deposed from office, shall be subject to the judgment of the Classis, with the advice of the Delegates of the (Particular) Synod mentioned in Article 11.

Synod decides that the rule is that the re-instatement of deposed Ministers of the Word must be effected by the same Classis that deposed him. Acts 1918, Art. 52, i.

ARTICLE 80

Furthermore among the gross sins, which are worthy of being punished with suspension or deposition from office, these are the principal ones: false doctrine or heresy, public schism, public blasphemy, simony, faithless desertion of office or intrusion upon that of another, perjury, adultery, fornication, theft, acts of violence, habitual drunkenness, brawling, filthy lucre; in short, all sins and gross offenses, as render the perpetrators infamous before the world, and which in any private member of the Church would be considered worthy of excommunication.

ARTICLE 81

The Ministers of the Word, Elders and Deacons, shall before the celebration of the Lord's Supper exercise Christian censure among themselves and in a friendly spirit admonish one another with regard to the discharge of their office.

ARTICLE 82

To those who remove from the Congregation a letter or testimony concerning their profession and conduct shall be given by the Consistory,

signed by two; or in the case of letters, which are given under the seal of the Church, signed by one.

Members or baptized members moving to other localities where no Christian Reformed Church is found, may retain their membership in the church which they leave, if they notify the consistory to this effect. If they neglect to do this, their membership lapses in one year and six weeks. The membership of such members as are located where no Christian Reformed Church is found must be transferred to the nearest church. If this is omitted, their membership lapses after one year and six weeks. Acts 1910, Art. 67, x.

No letter of dismission will be granted to those that request it because of grievances against other members of the congregation; these disagreements must first be removed in the congregation where membership is held, according to the rule given by the Lord. Acts 1898, Art. 89, 6.

Letters with remarks must be accepted, then to further pursue the proper ecclesiastical course. A. B. Art. 64.

According to Art. 82 of the Church Order, letters of dismission must be given those removing from the congregation. And they cannot be received as members of another congregation until they there present their letter, while in case they do not present their letter their membership will ultimately lapse. Acts 1914, Art. 63, 2.

Letters from Other Churches.

a. Letters from the Foreign Churches mentioned under Art. 85 of the Church Order, are recognized as fully valid, so that persons presenting such letters are without further question admitted as members.

b. Persons coming from non-affiliated Churches, but nevertheless considered as Churches that adhere to the Reformed Confession, shall, if proven to be sound in faith and life, be received by letter, provided they promise to submit to the supervision

and discipline of the consistory. This rule also applies to members of the present Christian Reformed Church in the Netherlands. Acts 1910, Art. 67, v.

Persons coming from the Ned. Herv. Kerk shall not be accepted merely by letter, but in their case Art. 61 shall apply.

Letters of baptism of the Ned. Herv. Kerk are received on condition that the consistories receiving them have the assurance that the parties concerned were baptized in the Name of the Triune God. Acts 1902, Art. 128, 66.

ARTICLE 83

Furthermore, to the poor, removing for sufficient reasons, so much money for traveling shall be given by the Deacons, as they deem adequate. The Consistory and the Deacons shall, however, see to it that they be not too much inclined to relieve their Churches of the poor, with whom they would without necessity burden other Churches.

ARTICLE 84

No Church shall in any way lord it over other Churches, no Minister over other Ministers, no Elder or Deacon over other Elders or Deacons.

ARTICLE 85

Churches whose usages differ from ours merely in non-essentials shall not be rejected.

Correspondence with Foreign Churches is entrusted to the Synodical Committee, which is to report concerning it to Synod annually. A. B., Art. 5.

a. Correspondence with affiliated Churches known to adhere to the Reformed Standards, must be sought and maintained more than has been the case heretofore.

b. This correspondence, however, is not to consist only in an exchange of greetings and formal calls, but also:

1) In sending delegates to each other's major assemblies, that there they may have advisory vote;
2) In taking mutual heed lest there be deviation from Reformed principle in doctrine, worship or discipline;
3) In mutual counsel what attitude to assume towards others;
4) In serving each other with advice, especially in case of proposed revision of Confession and Liturgy. Acts 1914, Art. 17, 7c.

c. That such correspondence be maintained with:

1) The Reformed Churches of the Netherlands.
2) The Old Ref. Churches of Bentheim and Ostfriesland.
3) The Ref. Churches of South Africa.

And in our own country:

4) The Ref. Churches in America.
5) The U. P. Church.
6) Synod and General Synod, Ref. Presb. Church.
7) Associate Presb. Church.

While the Ref. Churches of the Netherlands have expressed their readiness on this basic sense to entertain correspondence with our Church on this basis, except sub. 3, the correspondence with the affiliated churches in our country has not as yet progressed beyond the exchange of greetings and formal calls.

In the appointment of delegates to Synods of other Churches, it shall be taken into account as much as possible that by sending those who live in the vicinity, expenses can be saved.

ARTICLE 86

These Articles, relating to the lawful order of the Church, have been so drafted and adopted by common consent, that they (if the profit of the Church demand otherwise) may and ought to be altered, augmented or diminished. However, no particular Congregation, Classis, (or Synod) shall be at liberty to do so, but they shall show all diligence in observing them, until it be otherwise ordained by the General Synod.

MINISTER'S CONSISTORIAL CREDENTIAL.

The Consistory of the Christian Reformed Church of .....declares by these presents that the Rev. .....in this Church, from.....19.... to.....19.... has ministered in the office of Minister of the Divine Word faithfully and diligently, adhering in doctrine and life to the Word of God. as interpreted by our Forms of Unity and the Church Order.

And considering that sufficient reasons have been adduced for the consistory to acquiesce in his acceptance of the call of the church of....., we unhesitatingly recommend him to the Classis of.....and to the Church of....., with the prayer that the great King of the Church, who says to this of His servants "go," and he goeth, and to that one "come" and he cometh, may make him there also a rich blessing.

Resolved to grant him this testimonial of dismission at our meeting of.....19....

The Consistory of the above named Church,

..... President
..... Clerk

Classis.....in which the congregation of..... belongs, approves the above credential and transfers our beloved brother in the Ministry to the Classis of..... in whose midst our brother expects to serve the church of.....as pastor and minister.

On behalf of said Classis,

.....
.....

Done this.....day of.....19....

The Classical Committee of the Classis of..... having examined the above credentials, approves them and herewith authorizes the counselor of the church of .....to proceed to the installation.

The above named Classical Committee,

.....
.....

CLASSICAL CREDENTIALS

L. S.

To the Classis of.....
of the Christian Reformed Church,

to convene.....19....,

at .....

The Consistory of.....Christian Reformed Church, at....., has appointed the brethren

..... and elder .....
as delegates to represent said Church at the meeting of the Classis above referred to. The alternate delegates

are: elder..... and.....

We hereby instruct and authorize them to take part in all the deliberations and transactions of Classis regarding all matters legally coming before the meeting and transacted in agreement with the Word of God according to the conception of it embodied in the doctrinal standards of the Christian Reformed Church, as well as in harmony with our Church Order.

Instructions:

By order of the Consistory,

..... President

..... Clerk

Done in Consistory.....19.....

CALL-LETTER.

The Rev.....

.....

.....

Grace, Mercy and Peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Consistory of the Christian Reformed Church at .....herewith has the honor and the pleasure to inform you, that from a previously made nomination of .....you, Rev....., have been chosen by .....vote at a legal congregational meeting held on the.....day of..... 19.... to be their Minister of the Word and of the Sacraments.

On behalf of said congregation we therefore extend to you the call, and come to you with the urgent request: "Come over and help us."

The labors that we expect of you—should it please God to send you to us—are: Preaching twice on the Lord's Day, attending to catechetical instruction, to family visiting and calling on the sick, and furthermore of all things that pertain to the work of a faithful and diligent servant of the Lord, all these agreeably to the Word of God, as interpreted by our Forms of Unity and the Church Order of Dordrecht, as amended by the rules of our Church.

Convinced that the laborer is worthy of his hire, and to encourage you in the discharge of your duties, and to free you from all worldly cares and avocations while you are dispensing spiritual blessings to us, we, the Elders and Deacons of the.....Chr. Ref. Church do promise and oblige ourselves to pay you the sum of.....dollars, in.....payments, yearly, and every year as long as you continue the Minister of this Church, together with free use of parsonage, the free use of a telephone

.....

Moreover, we promise free transportation of yourself, your family and your belongings (under provisions as stipulated in Arts. 5, 10 and 11 of our Church Order).

Now, dear Reverend Brother, may the King of His Church so impress this call upon your heart and give you light, that you may arrive at a decision that is pleasing to Him and if possible for us mutually gratifying.

Done in Consistory, this.....day of.....19...., and subscribed with our names.

The Consistory of the Chr. Ref. Church of.....

Deacons	Elders
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....

.....Counselor.

CERTIFICATE OF DISMISSION

L. S.

The Consistory of the.....Christian Reformed Church of.....

Hereby Certifies that.....
(are) (is a) baptized member... of the above named congregation and consequently subject to the instruction and discipline of the Chr. Ref. Church in America, and we therefore request the Consistory of the.....
Church, at.....to take.....under their Christian direction and to continue to instruct.....
in the doctrine of truth unto godliness.

Attending of Divine Worship.....
Attending Catechism .....
General Remarks .....
..... President
..... Clerk

Done in Consistory.....

(To be returned at the earliest possible moment)

The Certificate of.....
from the.....Christian Reformed Church, of .....has been duly received and accepted.

Dated.....19.....
..... President
..... Clerk

Notice:—The above mentioned shall be considered still a member of the.....Christian Reformed Church until this receipt is returned properly signed.

The Certificate of.....
Sent to .....
Date Sent .....
Receipt Returned.....

LETTER OF DISMISSION

L. S.

The Consistory of the.....Christian Reformed Church of.....

Hereby certifies that.....and.....(are) (is a) member....of above congregation, and as far as is known to us (are) (is) sound in faith and upright in walk.

At.....request we hereby transfer our brother and sister to the.....Church of..... commending (her) (him) them to your christian fellowship and requesting the consistory to take (him) (her) them under their supervision and in all cases to serve (him) (her) them with christian counsel.

BAPTIZED CHILDREN

Name	Born	Baptized
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....

..... President

..... Clerk

Done in Consistory.....

(To be returned at the earliest possible moment)

The Certificate of.....

from the.....Christian Reformed Church, of .....has been duly received and accepted.

Dated.....19.....

..... President

..... Clerk

Notice:—The above mentioned shall be considered still a member of the.....Christian Reformed Church until this receipt is returned properly signed.

The Certificate of.....

Sent to .....

Date Sent .....

Receipt Returned .....

FORM OF ORDINATION OF THE MINISTERS OF GOD'S WORD

The sermon and the usual prayers being finished, the Minister shall thus speak to the congregation:

Beloved brethren, it is known unto you, that we have, at three different times, published the name of our brother N., here present, to learn whether any person had aught to offer concerning his doctrine of life, why he might not be ordained to the ministry of the Word. And whereas no one hath appeared before us, who hath alleged anything lawful against his person, we shall therefore at present, in the name of the Lord, proceed to his ordination; for which purpose, you N., and all those who are here present, shall first attend to a short declaration taken from the word of God, touching the institution and the office of pastors and ministers of God's Word; where, in the first place, you are to observe, that God our heavenly Father, willing to call and gather a Church from amongst the corrupt race of men unto life eternal, doth by a particular mark of his favor use the ministry of men therein.

Therefore, Paul saith, that the Lord Jesus Christ hath given some apostles and some proph-

ets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and ministers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. Here we see that the holy apostle among other things saith, that the pastoral office is an institution of Christ.

What this holy office enjoins, may easily be garthered from the very name itself; for as it is the duty of a common shepherd, to feed, guide, protect and rule the flock committed to his charge; so it is with regard to these spiritual shepherds, who are set over the Church, which God calleth unto salvation, and counts as sheep of his pasture. The pasture, with which these sheep are fed, is nothing else but the preaching of the gospel, accompanied with prayer, and the administration of the holy sacraments; the same word of God is likewise the staff with which the flock is guided and ruled, consequently it is evident, that the office of pastors and ministers of God's Word is,

First. That they faithfully explain to their flock, the Word of the Lord, revealed by the writings of the prophets and the apostles; and apply the same as well in general as in particular, to the edification of the hearers; instructing, admonishing, comforting and reproving, according to every one's need; preaching repentance towards God, and reconciliation with him through faith in Christ; and refuting with the Holy Scriptures, all schisms and heresies which are repugnant to the pure doctrine. All this is clearly signified to us in Holy Writ, for the Apostle Paul saith, "that

these labor in the Word"; and elsewhere he teacheth, that this must be done "according to the measure or rule of faith"; he writes also, that a pastor "must hold fast and rightly divide the faithful and sincere word which is according to the doctrine": likewise, he that prophesieth (that is, preacheth God's Word), speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation and comfort. In another place he proposes himself as a pattern to pastors, declaring that he hath publicly, and from house to house, taught and testified repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. But particularly we have a clear description of the office, and ministers of God's Word (2 Cor. 5:18, 19, 20), where the apostle thus speaketh, "And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us (namely, to the apostles and pastors) the ministry of reconciliation; to-wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." Concerning the refutation of false doctrine, the same apostle saith (Titus 1:9): "That a minister must hold fast the faithful Word of God, that he may be able by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convince the gainsayers."

Secondly. It is the office of the Ministers, publicly to call upon the name of the Lord in be-

half of the whole congregation; for that which the apostles say, we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word, is common to these pastors with the apostles; to which St. Paul alluding, thus speaking to Timothy: "I exhort, therefore, that first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority," etc. (1 Tim. 2: 1, 2.)

Thirdly. Their office is to administer the sacraments, which the Lord hath instituted as seals of his grace: as is evident from the command given by Christ to the apostles, and in them to all pastors: "Baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Likewise: "for I have received of the Lord, that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed," etc.

Finally, it is the duty of the Ministers of the Word, to keep the Church of God in good discipline, and to govern it in such a manner as the Lord hath ordained; for Christ having spoken of the Christian discipline, says to his apostles, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven. And Paul will have the ministers to know how to rule their own house, since they otherwise neither can provide for, nor rule the Church of God. This is the reason why the pastors are in Scripture called stewards of God, and bishops, that is, overseers and watchmen, for they

have the oversight of the house of God, wherein they are conversant, to the end that everything may be transacted with good order and decency; and also to open and shut, with the keys of the kingdom of heaven, committed to them, according to the charge given them by God.

From these things may be learned, what a glorious work the ministerial office is, since so great things are effected by it; yea, how highly necessary it is for man's salvation, which is also the reason why the Lord will have such an office always to remain. For Christ said when he sent forth his apostles to officiate in his holy function, Lo, I am always with you, even unto the end of the world; where we see his pleasure is, that this holy office (for the persons to whom he here speaketh, could not live to the end of the world) should always be maintained on earth. And therefore Paul exhorteth Timothy, to commit that which he had heard of him, to faithful men, who are able to teach others, and he also, having ordained Titus minister, further commanded him, to ordain elders in every city. (Titus 1: 5.)

Forasmuch, therefore, as we, for the maintaining of this office in the Church of God, are now to ordain a new minister of the Word, and having sufficiently spoken of the office of such persons, therefore you N., shall answer to the following questions, which shall be proposed to you, to the end that it may appear to all here present, that

you are inclined to accept of this office as above described.

First. I ask thee, whether thou feelest in thy heart that thou art lawfully called of God's Church, and therefore of God himself, to this holy ministry?

Secondly. Whether thou dost believe the books of the Old and New Testament to be the only Word of God, and the perfect doctrine unto salvation, and dost reject all doctrines repugnant thereto?

Thirdly. Whether thou dost promise faithfully to discharge thy office, according to the same doctrine as above described, and to adorn it with a godly life: also, to submit thyself, in case thou shouldest become delinquent either in life or doctrine, to ecclesiastical admonition, according to the public ordinance of the churches?

Answer. Yes, truly, with all my heart.

Then the Minister, who demanded those questions of him, while he and other Ministers who are present, shall lay their hands* on his head, shall say:

God our heavenly Father, who hath called thee to his holy ministry, enlighten thee with his Holy Spirit, strengthen thee with his hand, and

* This ceremony shall not be used in the case of those who have before been in the ministry.

so govern thee in thy ministry, that thou mayest decently and fruitfully walk therein, to the glory of his name, and the propagation of the kingdom of his Son Jesus Christ. Amen.

Then the Minister shall, from the pulpit, exhort the ordained Minister, and the congregation in the following manner:

"Take heed, therefore, beloved brother, and fellow-servant in Christ, unto thyself and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made thee overseer,to feed the Church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood: love Christ and feed his sheep, taking the oversight of them not by constraint, but willingly: not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind, neither as being lord over God's heritage, but as an example to the flock. Be an example of believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, meditate upon those things, give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all; take heed to thy doctrine, and continue steadfast therein. Bear patiently all sufferings, and oppressions, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, thou shalt receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."

"And you likewise, beloved Christians, receive

this your minister in the Lord with all gladness, 'and hold such in reputation.' Remember that God himself through him speaketh unto and beseecheth you. Receive the Word, which he, according to the Scripture, shall preach unto you, 'not as the word of man, but (as it is in truth) the Word of God.' Let the feet of those, that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things, be beautiful and pleasant unto you. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you. If you do these things, it shall come to pass, that the peace of God shall enter into your houses, and that you who receive this man in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward, and through his preaching, believing in Christ, shall through Christ, inherit life eternal."

Since no man is of himself fit for any of these things, let us call upon God with thanksgiving:

> Merciful Father, we thank thee that it hath pleased thee, by the ministry of men, to gather a Church to thyself unto life eternal, from amongst the lost children of men; we bless thee for so graciously providing the Church in this place with a faithful minister; we beseech thee to qualify him daily more and more by the Holy Spirit, for the ministry to which

thou hast ordained and called him: enlighten his understanding to comprehend thy holy Word, and give him utterance, that he may boldly open his mouth, to make known and dispense the mysteries of the gospel. Endue him with wisdom and valor, to rule the people aright over which he is set, and to preserve them in christian peace, to the end that thy Church under his administration and by his good example, may increase in number and in virtue. Grant him courage to bear the difficulties and troubles which he may meet with in his ministry, that being strengthened by the comfort of thy Spirit, he may remain steadfast to the end, and be received with all faithful servants into the joy of his master. Give thy grace also to this people and Church, that they may becomingly deport themselves towards this their minister; that they may acknowledge him to be sent of Thee; that they may receive his doctrine with all reverence, and submit themselves to his exhortations. To the end that they may, by his word, believing in Christ, be made partakers of eternal life. Hear us, O Father, through thy beloved Son, who hath taught us to pray:

Our Father, etc.

FORM OF ORDINATION OF ELDERS AND DEACONS

When ordained at the same time. But if they are ordained separately, this form shall be used as occasion requires

Beloved Christians, you know that we have several times published unto you the names of our brethren here present, who are chosen to the office of elders and deacons in this Church, to the end that we might know whether any person had aught to allege, why they should not be ordained in their respective offices; and whereas no one hath appeared before us, who hath alleged anything lawful against them, we shall therefore at present, in the name of the Lord, proceed to their ordination.

But first, you, who are to be ordained, and all those who are here present, shall attend to a short declaration from the word of God concerning the institution and the office of elders and deacons.

Of the **elders** is to be observed, that the word elder or eldest (which is taken from the Old Testament, and signifieth a person who is placed in an honorable office of government over others), is applied to two sorts of persons who minister in

the Church of Jesus Christ: for the apostle saith, "the elders that rule well, shall be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the Word and doctrine." Hence it is evident that there were two sorts of elders in the Apostolic Church, the former of which did labor in the Word and doctrine, and the latter did not. The first were the ministers of the Word and pastors, who preached the gospel and administered the sacraments; but the others, who did not labor in the Word, and still did serve in the Church, bore a particular office, namely, they had the oversight of the Church, and ruled the same with the ministers of the Word. For Paul, Rom. Chap. 12, having spoken of the ministry of the Word, and also of the office of distribution or deaconship, speaketh afterwards particularly of this office, saying, "he that ruleth let him do it with diligence"; likewise, in another place he counts government among the gifts and offices which God hath instituted in the Church: 1 Cor. 12. Thus we see that these sorts of ministers are added to the others who preach the gospel, to aid and assist them, as in the Old Testament the common Levites were to the priests in the service of the tabernacle, in those things which they could not perform alone: notwithstanding the offices always remained distinct one from the other. Moreover, it is proper that such men should be joined to the ministers of the Word in the government of the Church, to the end, that thereby all tyranny and lording may be kept out of the Church of God, which may

sooner creep in, when the government is placed in the hands of one alone, or of a very few. And thus the ministers of the Word, together with the elders, form a body or assembly, being as a council of the Church, representing the whole Church; to which Christ alludes when he saith, "Tell the Church"—which can in no wise be understood of all and every member of the Church in particular, but very properly of those who govern the Church, out of which they are chosen.

Therefore, in the **first** place, the office of elders is, together with the ministers of the Word, to take the oversight of the Church, which is committed to them, and diligently to look, whether every one properly deports himself in his confession and conversation; to admonish those who behave themselves disorderly, and to prevent, as much as possible, the sacraments from being profaned: also to act (according to the Christian discipline) against the impenitent, and to receive the penitent again into the bosom of the Church, as doth not only appear from the above mentioned saying of Christ, but also from many other places of Holy Writ, as 1 Cor. chap. 5, and 2 Cor. chap. 2, that these things are not alone intrusted to one or two persons, but to many who are ordained thereto.

Secondly. Since the apostle enjoineth, that all things shall be done decently and in order, amongst Christians, and that no other persons ought to serve in the Church of Christ, but those who are lawfully called, according to the christian

ordinance, therefore it is also the duty of the elders to pay regard to it, and in all occurrences, which relate to the welfare and good order of the Church, to be assistant with their good counsel and advice, to the ministers of the Word, yea, also to serve all Christians with advice and consolation.

Thirdly. It is also the duty particularly to have regard unto the doctrine and conversation of the ministers of the Word, to the end that all things may be directed to the edification of the Church; and that no strange doctrine be taught, according to that which we read, Acts 20, where the apostle exhorteth to watch diligently against the wolves, which might come into the sheepfold of Christ; for the performance of which, the elders are in duty bound diligently to search the Word of God, and continually be meditating on the mysteries of faith.

Concerning the **deacons:** of the origin and institution of their office we may read, Acts 6, where we find that the apostles themselves did in the beginning serve the poor, "At whose feet was brought the price of the things that were sold: and distribution was made unto every man, according as he had need. But afterwards, when a murmuring arose, because the widows of the Grecians were neglected in the daily ministration:" men were chosen (by the advice of the apostles) who should make the service of the poor their peculiar business, to the end that the apostles

might continually give themselves to prayer, and to the ministry of the Word. And this has been continued from that time forward in the Church, as appears from Rom. 12, where the apostle, speaking of this office, saith, "he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity." And 1 Cor. 12: 28 speaking of helps, he means those, who are appointed in the Church to help and assist the poor and indigent in time of need.

From which passage we may easily gather, what the deacon's office is, namely, that they in the **first** place collect and preserve with the greatest fidelity and diligence, the alms and goods which are given to the poor: yea, to do their utmost endeavors, that many good means be procured for the relief of the poor.

The **second** part of their office consists in distribution, wherein are not only required discretion and prudence to bestow the alms only on objects of charity, but also cheerfulness and simplicity to assist the poor with compassion and hearty affection: as the apostle requires, Rom., chap. 12; and 2 Cor., chap. 9. For which end it is very beneficial, that they do not only administer relief to the poor and indigent with external gifts, but also with comfortable words from Scripture.

To the end, therefore, beloved brethren, N. N., that every one may hear, that you are willing to take your respective offices upon you, ye shall answer to the following questions:

And in the **first** place I ask you, both elders and deacons, whether you do not feel in your hearts,

that ye are lawfully called of God's Church, and consequently of God himself, to these your respective holy offices?

Secondly. Whether ye believe the books of the Old and New Testament to be the only Word of God, and the perfect doctrine of salvation, and do reject all doctrines repugnant thereto?

Thirdly. Whether ye promise, agreeably to said doctrine, faithfully, according to your ability, to discharge your respective offices, as they are here described? ye elders in the government of the Church together with the ministers of the Word: and ye deacons in the ministration to the poor? Do ye also jointly promise to walk in all godliness, and to submit yourselves, in case ye should become remiss in your duty, to the admonition of the Church?—Upon which they shall answer: Yes.

Then the Minister shall say:

The Almighty God and Father, replenish you all with his grace, that ye may faithfully and fruitfully discharge your respective offices. Amen.

The Minister shall further exhort them, and the whole congregation, in the following manner:

Therefore, ye elders, be diligent in the government of the Church, which is committed to you, and the ministers of the Word. Be also, as watchmen over the house and city of God, faithful to admonish and to caution every one against his

ruin. Take heed that purity of doctrine and godliness of life be maintained in the Church of God. And, ye **deacons,** be diligent in collecting the alms, prudent and cheerful in the distribution of the same: assist the oppressed, provide for the true widows and orphans, show liberality unto all men, but especially to the household of faith.

Be ye all with one acord faithful in your offices, and hold the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience, being good examples unto all the people. In so doing you will purchase to yourselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith, which is in Christ Jesus, and hereafter enter into the joy of our Lord. On the other hand, beloved Christians, receive these men as the servants of God: count the elders that rule well worthy of double honor, give yourselves willingly to their inspection and government. Provide the deacons with good means to assist the indigent. Be charitable, ye rich, give liberally, and contribute willingly. And, ye poor, be poor in spirit, and deport yourselves respectfully towards your benefactors, be thankful to them, and avoid murmuring: follow Christ, for the food of your souls, but not for bread. "Let him that hath stolen (or who hath been burdensome to his neighbors) steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the things which are good, that he may give to him that needeth." Each of you, doing these things in your respective callings, shall receive of the Lord, the reward of righteousness.

But since we are unable of ourselves, let us call upon the name of the Lord saying:

> O Lord God and heavenly Father, we thank thee that it hath pleased thee, for the better edification of thy Church, to ordain in it, besides the ministers of the Word, rulers and assistants, by whom thy Church may be preserved in peace and prosperity, and the indigent assisted; and that Thou hast at present granted us in this place, men, who are of good testimony, and we hope endowed with thy Spirit. We beseech thee, replenish them more and more with such gifts as are necessary, for them in their ministration; with the gifts of wisdom, courage, discretion, and benevolence, to the end that every one may, in his respective office, acquit himself as is becoming; the elders in taking diligent heed unto the doctrine and conversation, in keeping out the wolves from the sheepfold of thy beloved Son; and in admonishing and reproving disorderly persons. In like manner, the deacons in carefully receiving, and liberally and prudently distributing of the alms to the poor, and in comforting them with thy holy Word. Give grace both to the elders and deacons, that they may persevere in their faithful labor, and never become weary by reason of any trouble, pain or persecution of the world.

Grant also especially thy divine grace to this people, over whom they are placed, that they may willingly submit themselves to the good exhortations of the elders, counting them worthy of honor for their work's sake; give also unto the rich, liberal hearts towards the poor, and to the poor grateful hearts towards those who help and serve them; to the end that every one acquitting himself of his duty, thy holy name may thereby be magnified, and the kingdom of thy Son Jesus Christ enlarged, in whose name we conclude our prayers, saying: "Our Father," etc.

FORM FOR THE INSTALLATION OF PROFESSORS OF THEOLOGY.

Beloved brethren, it is known unto you that our brother in the holy ministry, N. N., has been called by our last Synod to the important office of professor of theology at our Theological Seminary. To our joy he has accepted this call, and we are now assembled to install him in office. For which purpose we request thee, brother N.N., to arise and to listen to that which belongs to this office, and is placed by the Lord and the Church in thy charge.

Since our God, who is rich in mercy, has chosen in his great love a Church unto himself for the inheritance of eternal life, and will gather this Church through his Spirit and Word to the fellowship of his Son, in the unity of true faith, and to the increase of the knowledge of his will, so it pleases him to call men by his Holy Spirit, who as ministers of the Word are to preach the glad tidings of salvation among those who already belong to the Church and among those outside, who are yet without the knowledge of God's ways.

The first messengers of peace in the days of the New Testament were immediately taught by our Lord Jesus Christ, and were by him person-

ally trained and sent. After the outpouring of the Holy Spirit he gave them great diversities of extraordinary gifts and knowledge of the mysteries of salvation of sinners and the upbuilding of saints. Because these extraordinary methods, however, lasted only as long as the Lord judged them to be necessary for the founding of his Church among the nations, the necessity was soon felt of training youths and men for the holy ministry under the ordinary dispensation of the Spirit by the regular methods of education. And this especially in virtue of what Paul wrote in 2 Tim. 2: 2, "And the things which thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." The Apostle here points to what he had himself done and what he required of his disciple Timothy.

In obedience to this apostolic direction this training was originally done by learned and capable overseers of the Church. Later the schools of Alexandria, Antioch, and other important cities were especially engaged in this work. And when towards the end of the middle ages and in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries universities arose in various places, theology was not incorporated merely as a faculty with other faculties, but usually recognized as Queen of Sciences. This was the more easily done because the Church, both Roman Catholic and Protestant, exercised authority over or concerned itself with everything.

As long as a university is founded on the basis

of Holy Scripture, accepts the confession of a certain denomination, and this denomination has part control in the appointing of professors of theology, it can not be disapproved of that future ministers of the Word should receive their education at such an institution.

Since, however, Paul in Rom. 3:2 expressly declares that the Church of the Old Dispensation, and therefore also the Church of the New Dispensation, was given the special prerogative that to her were intrusted the oracles of God, it follows therefore that the Church has a divine mission to proclaim the words of God, to collect from the Word of God her standards of faith, to study theology according to these words, and further to advance what is in direct connection with this study.

Conscious of this calling our Church has also established a Theological School and called the reverend brother N. N. to devote his talents to this School.

In behalf of our Church the Curators charge thee, esteemed brother, with the task of instructing and establishing in the knowledge of God's Word, the students who hope once to minister in his Church. Expound to them the mysteries of the faith; caution them in regard to the errors and heresies of the old, but especially of the new day; seek to explain how they not alone as teachers are to instruct, but also as pastors are to shepherd the flock of the Lord. Assist in maintaining order and discipline among the disciples,

that our Seminary may continue to enjoy the respect, the support, the appreciation, the love and the prayer of the Church. Be a good example to the students, that they may not only profit from thy learning, but aleo find in thee a living illustration of the power and practice of true godliness.

Be engaged in all of this according to the measure of the gifts God gave thee, in dependence on the Lord's help and the light of the Holy Spirit.

And that it may now publicly appear that thou, highly esteemed brother, art thus disposed, thou art to answer the following questions:

First. I ask thee, dost thou feel in thy heart that thou art lawfully called of God's Church and therefore of God himself to this office?

Secondly. Dost thou believe the books of the Old and New Testament to be the only Word of God. Dost thou reject all doctrine repugnant thereto, and dost thou accept the doctrinal standards of the Christian Reformed Church as the truest expression of the doctrine of salvation?

Thirdly. Dost thou promise faithfully to discharge thy office according to the same doctrine above described, and to adorn it with a godly life?

Fourthly. Dost thou promise to submit thyself, in case thou shouldest become delinquent, either in life or doctrine, to the ordinance of the Church, and if necessary, to Church discipline?

Answer: Yes, with all my heart.

FORM OF ORDINATION OF MISSIONARIES.

Beloved in our Lord and Savior and all here present.

It is known to you that our brother N. N., called by the.....as missionary minister of the Word among the Heathen (Dispersed), (and recently examined by the Classis of.....) is now to be publicly ordained (installed) as missionary.

We, therefore, request thee, beloved brother N. N., to arise and to attend to a short declaration touching the office of missionary ministers of the Word.

Since our God, according to his infinite mercy, has chosen a Church unto everlasting life, and gathers it by his blessed gospel, out of every nation, and of all tribes and peoples and tongues, unto the fellowship of his Son, in unity of the true faith, therefore our risen Savior has ordained an office and has called men, to carry the message of salvation to all peoples, commanding his apostles, and in them all lawful ministers of the Word: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Mark 16: 15. For he that ascended far above all the heavens, that he might

fulfill all things, gave some to be apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ. And the Apostles, responding to this, went forth into the world declaring the whole counsel of God, particularly repentance, and remission of sins, through faith in Jesus Christ, testifying: "for God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." John 3: 16. "But all things are of God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and gave unto us the ministry of reconciliation: to-wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. We are ambassadors, therefore, on behalf of Christ, as though God were entreating by us: we beseech you on behalf of Christ, be ye reconciled to God." 2 Cor. 5.

Without this word of reconciliation, faith in Christ and consequently salvation, is and remains forever impossible, for Holy Scripture says, Acts 4: 12: "And in none other is there salvation; for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved;" and elsewhere: Rom. 10: 14, 15, 17: "How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they

be sent? So then, faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."

Although all ministers of the Word have in common, that to them is committed the preaching of the Gospel, the administration of the Sacraments, the government of the Church, and the maintenance of christian discipline, yea, all, that, according to the Word of God belongs to the office of pastor and teacher: and although from the difference of field of labor no difference is resulting, concerning office, authority or dignity, since all possess the same mission, the same office and the same authority, yet notwithstanding this, it is necessary that some labor in the congregations already established, while others are called and sent to preach the Gospel to those without, in order to bring them to Christ. And let each man abide in that calling wherein he was called by the Church of God and consequently by God himself and whereunto each has received gifts, until it pleases the Lord to lead him along a lawful way to a different field of labor.

That unto the **Heathen** also these glad tidings must be brought appears plainly from Matt. 28: 19, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."

The same was revealed to Peter by showing him as it were a great sheet let down by four corners upon the earth, wherein were all manner

of beasts, and thereupon commanding him to go down to the Gentile Cornelius, saying: "Arise, and get thee down, and go with them, nothing doubting; for I have sent them," Acts 10: 20. Likewise he spoke to Paul in a vision in the temple: "Depart: for I will send thee forth far hence unto the Gentiles." Acts 22: 21.

This divine charge was also carried out by the church of Antioch, when they, after fasting and prayer, laid their hands upon Barnabas and Saul and sent them away to preach the gospel also unto the Gentiles, Acts 13. And when they on their first missionary journey had arrived at Antioch in Pisidia, they testified to the contradicting Jews: "Lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying: I have set thee for a light of the Gentiles; that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the uttermost part of the earth."

And besides all this it is evident that the work of missions is the task of the Church since the Lord Jesus himself calls his Church the salt of the earth, and says: "Ye are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a lamp, and put it under the bushel, but on the stand." Matt. 5.

That unto the **Dispersed** also these glad tidings must be brought is plainly inferred from what God says in Ezekiel 34: 11-16: "For thus saith the Lord God: Behold I myself, even I, will search for my sheep, and will seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he

is among his sheep that are scattered abroad, so will I seek out my sheep; and I will deliver them out of all places whither they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. And I will bring them out from the peoples, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land; and I will feed them upon the mountains of Israel, by the water courses, and in all the inhabited places of the country. I will feed them with good pasture, and upon the mountains of the height of Israel shall their fold be: there shall they lie down in a good fold, and on fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel. I myself will feed my sheep, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord God. I will seek that which was lost, and I will bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick. I will feed them in judgment."

That the Lord does this by means of his servants, is clearly shown by the way wherein God, in the same chapter, rebukes the unfaithful shepherds: "Neither have ye brought again that which was driven away," and expresses his holy indignation because: "My sheep wandered thru all the mountains, and upon every high hill: yea, my sheep were scattered upon all the face of the earth; and there was none that did search or seek after them." Ezekiel 34: 4, 6.

The same also follows from the fact that Jesus who Himself was sent "to the lost sheep of the House of Israel," calls the Church the salt of the

earth, while besides all this, the example of the Apostle Paul teaches us plainly that it is our high calling to bring the bread of life to our dispersed brethren after the flesh everywhere, and therefore certainly first of all in our own country, to gather them, if possible, as congregations of our Lord.

And since thou, beloved brother, art now called and art now being sent to labor among the **Heathen (Dispersed)**, thou art to consider which important **duties** are thereby devolving upon thee:

In the **first** place thou art to bring to their attention by all fit and lawful means, the glad tidings that Jesus Christ has come into the world to save sinners. All thine actions, thy speaking and thy silence, yea, all thine influence is to co-operate to recommend the gospel of Christ. Let thy conversation be without covetousness; abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good, that thou mayest be able to say with the Apostle Paul, 1 Cor. 9: 19, 22, 27: "For though I was free from all men, I brought myself under bondage to all, that I might gain the more . . . . I am become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some. I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage: lest by any means, after that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected."

Secondly, thou art holden, if it pleases God to make thy work fruitful unto the gathering of a church, to administer the Sacrament of Holy Baptism according to the institution of the Lord and the requirement of the covenant.

Furthermore, thou art called wherever it is necessary and possible to ordain elders and deacons even as Paul charged Titus, chapter 1: 5, saying: "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that were wanting, and appoint elders in every city, as I gave thee charge." But lay hands hastily on no man.

Moreover, there is committed unto thee, as minister of Christ and steward of the mysteries of God, the administering of the Holy Supper of the Lord according to the institution of Christ.

Besides this, there is commended unto thee the maintaining of christian discipline in the midst of the congregation, by faithful use of the keys of the Kingdom, as our Lord Jesus has spoken: "Go, shew him his fault, between thee and him alone," etc. And afterward: "Verily I say unto you, what things soever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven."

And **finally,** beloved brother, be a faithful servant of Jesus Christ, and a careful shepherd of the flock. "Preach the Word; be urgent in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching, ... be an example to them that believe, in word, in manner of life, in love, in faith, in purity." . . . . "Give heed to reading, to exhortation, to teaching. Neglect not the gift that is in thee." . . . . "Be diligent in these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy progress may be manifest unto all. Take heed to thyself, and to thy teaching. Continue in these things; for in doing this thou shalt save both thy-

self and them that hear thee." (2 Tim. 4: 2 and 1 Tim. 4: 12b, 16).

And that now everyone present may hear, beloved brother, that thou art willing, and ready to undertake the ministry of the Word among the **Heathen (Dispersed)**, thou art requested to answer sincerely the following questions:

First. I ask thee whether thou feelest in thy heart that thou art lawfully called of God's Church and therefore of God himself, to this holy ministry?

Secondly. Whether thou dost believe the books of the Old and New Testament to be the only Word of God, and the perfect doctrine unto salvation, and dost reject all doctrines repugnant thereto?

Thirdly. Whether thou dost promise faithfully to discharge thine office, according to the same doctrine as above described, and to adorn it with a godly life; also, to submit thyself, in case thou shouldest become delinquent either in life or doctrine, to ecclesiastical admonition, according to the public ordinance of the churches?

Answer: Yes, truly, with all my heart.

Then the Minister, who demanded those questions of him, while he and other Ministers who are present, shall lay their hands* on his head, shall say:

"Go then beloved brother and teach

*This ceremony shall not be used in the case of those who have before been in the Ministry.

all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. God our heavenly Father, who hath called thee to his holy ministry, enlighten thee with his Holy Spirit, strengthen thee with his hand and so govern thee in thy ministry, that thou mayest decently and fruitfully walk therein, to the glory of his Name, and the propagation of the Kingdom of his Son Jesus Christ." Amen.

RULES FOR THE SYNODICAL COMMITTEE.

Article 1

The Synodical Committee of the Christian Reformed Church consists of three members, with the Stated Clerk as member ex officio and secretary.

Article 2

Members of this Committee are chosen at each Synod from the ministers of the church by regular ballot for a term of two years. The term of the Stated Clerk is four years.

Article 3

The Committee itself chooses from its number a President and a Treasurer.

Article 4

This Committee is instructed to execute all matters recommended to it by definite instruction of Synod.

Article 5

The Committee, through its Stated Clerk, maintains correspondence with other Churches, receives the missives addressed to the Christian Reformed Church by other Churches, gives them general publicity where this is appropriate and answers them.

The Committee is also charged by Synod in case of general, crying sins, especially in case of Sabbath desecration, divorce and drunkenness, to agitate against these by petitions in the name of the whole Church.

Article 6

In case any Classis should desire, the Committee is permitted, in weighty matters, to serve it with good counsel or to give advice, but never to obstruct any ecclesiastical assembly in its activities.

Article 7

When a decision is taken by any Classis that should be given general publicity, or in which the co-operation of the churches necessary and of which the execution can not well be postponed till the next Synod, the Synodical Committee may be requested to support such decision with its approval in case it considers this profitable.

Article 8

The Committee shall give notice through "De Wachter' 'and "The Banner" of all weighty correspondence or actions performed by the Committee that demand speedy publicity.

Article 9

The Committee submits a written report at every Synodical gathering of all its activities performed since the last Synod.

Article 10

The Committee shall be authorized to request the Synodical Treasurer to reimburse the members of the Committee for all necessary expenses upon proper receipt.

Article 11

Every omission or transgression of the rules of this constitution renders the acts of the Committee with respect to the Church of none effect.

Article 12

This constitution, drafted upon instruction of Synod of 1886, and accepted by that of 1890, remains in force until another Synod shall have amended it.

PUBLIC DECLARATION OF AGREEMENT WITH THE FORMS OF UNITY.

Of all the marks by which the True Church distinguishes itself from all human societies, the Confession of the Truth must be mentioned in the first place. The Savior therefore said, John 8: 31: "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed." And again: "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven," Matthew 10: 32. In obedience to the Lord and for the instruction of all, the Assembly of Elders, delegated by the congregations of the Christian Reformed Church, deem it proper that they publicly declare what the confession is of the Church here mentioned and of every one of its churches.

All the congregations of this Church believe all the Books of the Old and of the New Testaments to be the Word of God and confess as the true expression of their faith the Thirty-seven Articles of the Confession of the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands, formulated by the Synod of 1618-'19, together with the Heidelberg Catechism and the Canons of the Dordrecht Synod against the Remonstrants (Arminians).

In conformity with the belief of all these con-

gregations, we, as members of their Synod, declare that from the heart we feel and believe, that all articles and expressions of Doctrine, contained in the three above named Confessions, jointly called the Three Forms of Unity, in all respects agree with the Word of God, whence we reject all doctrines repugnant thereto; that we desire to conform all our actions to them, agreeably to the accepted Church Order of Dordrecht 1618-'19, and desire to receive into our church communion everyone that agrees to our Confession.

May the King of the Church work this faith in the hearts of many and increase it, and those that have received a like precious faith with us show the grace shown them in fellowship to the glory of Him who prayed that all His own shall be one in Him.

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